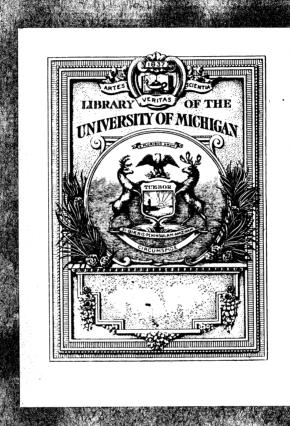


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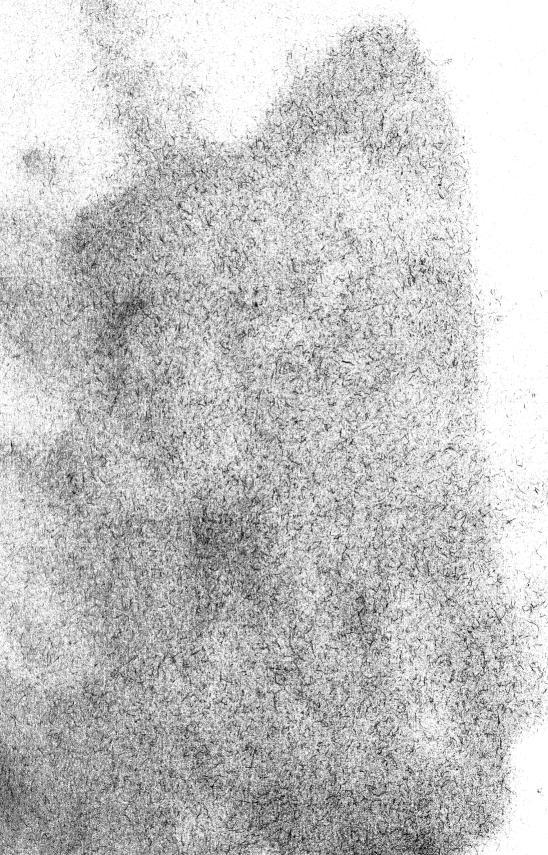
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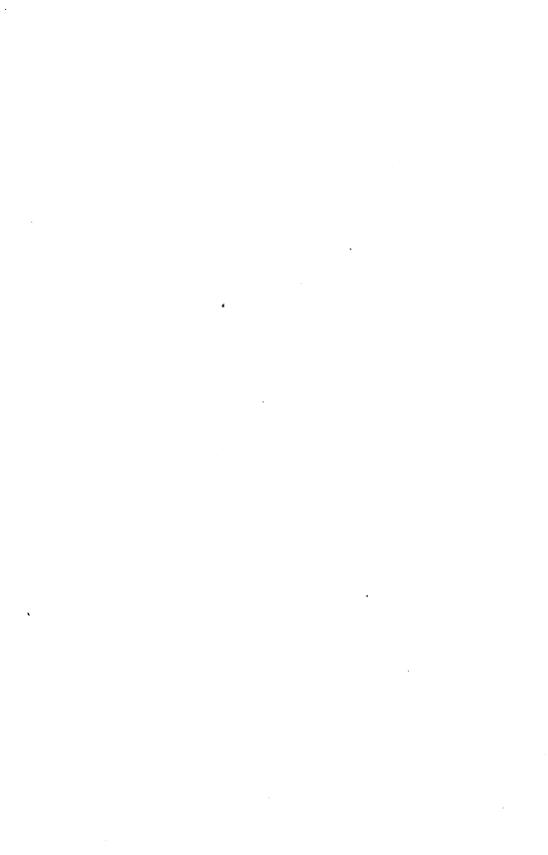












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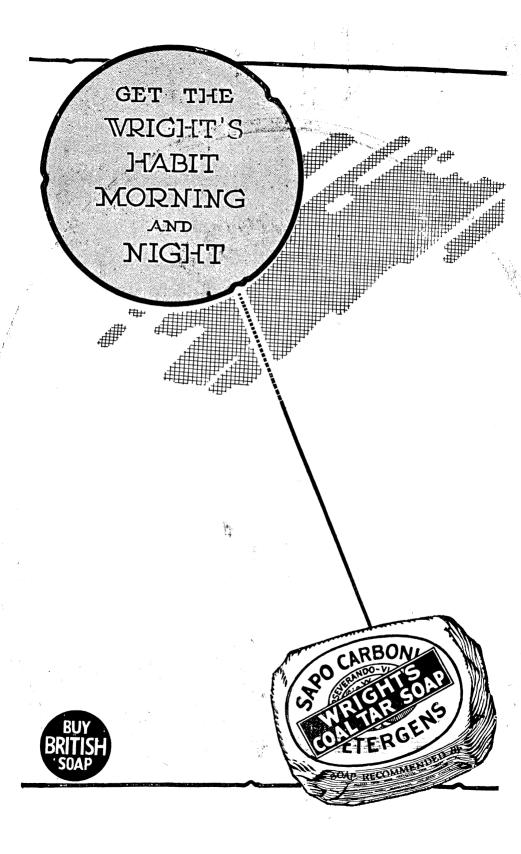
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THE HOMEWARD WAY.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY BY PERCY G. LUCK.



THE NATURE OF THE CONTENTS

By E. TEMPLE THURSTON

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

THERE is a look in the faces of the young women to-day which suggests they are taking themselves seriously. This look is not without humour. Which is a good thing. The preponderance of their sex since the War, the loss of a whole generation of the best there was in the nation's manhood, may have a great deal to do with it. The reason does not matter so much as the fact that it is there.

Kathleen Ash had it. She looked at men when she passed them in the street as though she were not aware that she was a woman. In many cases she may not have been quite aware that they were men. There is always

that possibility about this new look. It is not unattractive.

It attracted Gordon Steele, the actor manager, when he saw Kathleen Ash playing a small *ingénue* part in a West End production. He was needing a modern type for the leading woman's part in a new play. Her personality reached him across the footlights. He made a note of it and the next morning gave a letter to his secretary.

DEAR MISS ASH,-

"I saw your performance the other night and should like to have a talk with you. Can you arrange to come and see me to-

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morrow morning at the theatre at eleven o'clock."

He wrote his signature at an angle of forty-five degrees because the caligraphists tell you this is the sign of a forceful and optimistic nature. He was not an optimist. He was a cynic. But he had considerable confidence and belief in the fortunes of Gordon Steele.

The receipt of this letter that same afternoon was communicated to the whole of the Ash household by shouts that resounded from the top to the bottom of the house. When Mr. Ash returned from matters of fact in the City, he was kissed as he reached the doorstep. In taking herself seriously, the young woman of to-day is not without the exuberance of her emotions. She is particular about their distribution. because of her sense of humour.

When Kathleen rang up Robert Beale on the telephone and asked him to take her to a night club after the theatre, her voice was the voice of the Kathleen Ash he had known since he first came down from Oxford and acquired the post of dramatic critic on one of the London dailies. It was selfpossessed. It was the same voice that had twice refused to marry him. It was the voice that had said:

"Bobby—don't let's talk about marriage. Let's get on with our jobs. I'm not just playing at acting. I'm not on the stage for something to do. I want to do something."

One of the interesting things about the young man of to-day is that he listens to this kind of talk and is obedient about it. He does not say, "Oh—that's all rot. leave the job of work to me." He does not indulge in any of that kind of heavy-handed masculinity. He is, as it were, the complement to her type. Whatever the conditions of life may be that have made her, they have also made him. Possibly he knows how difficult it is to get the job of work. But again the reasons don't matter. He is like that and there would be an end of it, if life ever permitted civilisation to stay where it is.

Bobby took her to a night club in Soho that had recently been opened over some The dark dirtiness of its approach contrasted with the cubist glamour of its decorations within, made it one of the most popular haunts of after-theatre life in a dingy neighbourhood. It gave a flavour to kippers on toast which could be equalled nowhere else. Beyond this it was merely a room of inadequate proportions where the young men and young women of the theatre acquired that fatigue and oblivion which produces the sleep so essential to the energy required for their work.

Over their kippers, Kathleen handed him

"That's for his new play," said Bobby. He proceeded to tell her the theatrical secrets about the new production at Steele's There were only three women's characters. Obviously she was wanted for the ingénue. It was the leading part.

"It'll make me," she said.

"Make you what?"

"Make my name."

"The theatre's full of names," said Bobby.

"So's every place."

He agreed.

"Well, what's the matter with a name?" He told her it was a label.

"What's the harm in that?"

"No harm. It signified the nature of the contents-that's all. Strawberry jam. Once that's put on the jar you don't go to it for pickles."

"Do you want pickles?"

"They give a flavour, you know."

"So does strawberry jam."
"Of course it does, but it tastes rotten with cold beef. How would you like it

with these kippers?"

She pushed her plate away from her. There was a taste of strawberry jam in her mouth. She didn't like it. She liked him still less for mixing it with the kippers and giving it to her. She knew what he meant, but didn't want to understand. It felt as if he were taking her chance away from her.

"If he offers me the part, do you mean to

say I oughtn't to take it?"

Good heavens, no! The only thing I'm saying is don't let it make your name. Don't let it label you. Didn't you tell me once you loved the theatre better than anything else in the world?"

"So I did."

"So do I," said Bobby.

The floor was throbbing with couples dancing to the music of a piano in the corner. Oblivion had come already to a good many of them. Fatigue was at its heels. Nobody paid the faintest attention to Bobby and Kathleen Ash. She looked at him over the top of a glass of lemonade she was drinking and said:

"Better than me?"

"Better than you," said he.

She had looked surprised before she could stop herself.

"That's rather amusing," she said.

" Why ? "

- "Because you've asked me to marry you twice."
 - " Yes."
- "And all the time you were more fond of something else."

"Why not?"

"Oh, no reason, only I fancy if ever I do marry, I shall want to come first."

"Does that mean there's no chance for

me at all?"

"It means I'm glad you told me, because now we can get on with our jobs."

He wished her luck with hers.

She was dressed the next morning at ten in what was known in the Ash household as the *ingénue* mode. There were other modes for other occasions. With all the secrets flying about the theatrical world like lovebirds in an aviary, it was not difficult to learn the significance of impending interviews with managers in time to dress the part accordingly. To Steele's theatre at eleven o'clock she went in the *ingénue* mode.

He was engaged on the telephone when she was shown into the reception room off his dressing-room. He did not rise, but nodded her to a chair.

She sat down, saying to herself:

"It's all right—don't fret yourself. You're Kathleen Ash, and if he doesn't give you the part, you'll still be Kathleen Ash, my dear. Stick it."

And over the telephone, Steele was saying: "All right—I can't see her to-day—I'll see her to-morrow."

"That's someone else for your part, my dear," said Kathleen Ash, encouraging fortitude in the young woman in an *ingénue* mode.

He continued on the telephone a few moments longer until there could be no mistake that he was discussing the suitability of someone else for the *ingénue* part in his new play. Then he hung the receiver up. It would have appeared to have become too heavy to hold to his ear any longer. There was every indication that the telephone could curse as well as bless. He obviously restrained his temper and said:

"Good morning."

It was not easy to say good morning cheerfully with one's lips dry. She felt her smile to be uncommonly like a grin. It conveyed the sensation to her of her face cracking. Whatever it was like, she smiled, and all the time she was wishing she knew what kind of a part it was so that she could behave like it.

"There's the part of a young girl in my new play," he began.

It was like listening to a voice broadcasting. What he was saying sounded as if it applied to every other girl of her age and abilities on the stage. She had dressed that morning saying to herself, "I'd better ask fifteen. If it's really a big part, I ought to ask twenty. They take you at your own valuation. The less you ask, the less they think of you."

On the way down to the West End in the bus and seeing frocks in the shop windows that were smarter than her own, she had considered twelve was as much as she ought to expect. She was receiving a salary of ten pounds a week in the part she was playing. Twelve would be a definite advance.

These were not commercial considerations. She did not really value money in the abstract. She had a vague sense of her own worth and the worth of the part she was playing. She reckoned it in tens, twelves, fifteens and twenties. It might have been twenty pence. But if it ought to have been twenty, then it was derogatory to accept fifteen.

Once again when she was out of the bus and walking, as even a leading actress must walk sometimes in the neighbourhood of the theatres, there was a sharp rise in her reckonings to fifteen. It ought not to be less than fifteen.

But after Steele had been talking for two minutes and she had listened, with all those others he made her conscious of who would have given the souls out of their bodies to play a lead with him, she would have taken seven.

"If I take you and rehearse you in this part," he was saying, "you realise it will probably make your name in the West End."

Yes, she knew that. Without seeing the part she felt she knew that. She was quite sure then she would not stand out for more than seven. The only thing that remained in doubt, ranged itself like a shelf across her mind. She found herself gazing at a row of jars, all labelled. It was so vivid that it did not appear the least ridiculous to her to say:

"Is it a sort of strawberrry-jam part—or pickles—or what?"

She thought in fact the question was very descriptive. He did not appear to find it so. He did not associate the fare of his theatre with the grocery business. He put it that way.

She explained hastily that she had not

meant it that way herself. She tried to make him understand that she cared for her work and that it meant something to her not to be labelled in a part she did not care for so that managers could not see her ability to do any other kind of work. She found herself talking with enthusiasm about the theatre as though it were one of those places in modern life where thought is alive and the public were stimulated to think about things for themselves.

Mr. Steele liked her enthusiasm so far as it lit up her face, parted her lips, made her eyes shine and suffused her cheeks with a quick glow. But he was not at all interested

in what she was saying.

"Take your hat off," he said when the sound of her own voice alone in the room

had stopped her.

She took it off. Shook her head. prayer to that deity that looks after women in the long absences between one mirror and another, and waited.

She looked so attractive that he said:

"Well, I think I can say you'll be all right for this part. I saw possibilities in you the other night. You were badly produced in that play, mind you. You'll need producing."

"Who is producing this play for you?"

she asked.

"I am," said he.

He was surprised she did not know that he

produced all his plays.

"And now let me say this," he added: "It may sound unnecessary, but I'm so sick and tired of the things that are said about me in connection with the ladies I play love scenes with, that I find it better to stop them before they begin. This theatre is run on business lines. The plays that are done here are cast without any sentiment. Anyone who comes to work in my theatre has to shut the door and leave sentiment outside on the pavement."

She wanted to ask him to say that all over again and very slowly so that she did not miss the key to what must be its rational intention. It being impossible to do that in an interview that was being conducted on business lines, she stammered out:

"You mean I'm not to fall in love with

you?"

He shrugged his shoulders. Plain speaking was the worst habit he knew. The modern young woman could be offensive in this respect. He disliked her interpretation. He was not aware that he disliked her for making it.

"I shouldn't be such a fool as to suppose any possibility of that kind. But the fact that I'm not married induces everyone to talk about me in connection with the women I play love scenes with. There's a love scene in this play and I'm sure you don't want the reputation of being engaged to marry me and having to get it contradicted before the run of the piece is over. That's all."

Whatever there was in the way of confusion, he had stepped out of it. He did not in fact feel himself to be disarranged at all. To her, he had every appearance of a man who had been sleeping under a hav-stack and had been rudely awakened in broad sunlight. She was relieved to be sent to the business manager's office. Steele could not discuss questions of salary with any actor or actress engaged to play in his company. It was an indelicate subject! He disliked it intensely. The business manager had no such temperament. He could discuss anything. In ten minutes he had discussed with Kathleen Ash the advantages of being produced by and playing with Gordon Steele. They appeared so prodigious that when he told her they were not proposing to pay more than seven pounds a week for the part, it had the sound of Quixotic generosity.

"I am getting ten," she told him, but it was very like telling a fairy story to a child who had a passion for clockwork engines and

mechanical toys.

The business manager said:

"Of course, some of these mushroom managements pay salaries as though they had a proprietary right in the miracle of the loaves and fishes. They wonder why they don't last. Mr. Steele has been in this theatre in continuous management for ten years. That's an advantage you can't get elsewhere. Of course, if I mentioned it to Mr. Steele, he'd say-' Give her whatever she asks for.' He's the spirit of liberality. You couldn't have a more generous man. That's why he leaves me to do this business for him. I have no feelings about that sort of thing. I'll tell him you'll want eight pounds a week to play the part if you like. It's a fairly big part, of course, but if you paid us eight pounds a week for playing it you'd stand to profit in the end. Leading ingénue in Steele's theatre. A lot of young girls 'ud pay for that—wouldn't they? Šhall I tell him eight pounds!"

Kathleen Ash nodded her head. It sounded like some ill-favoured dream to hear herself accept eight pounds a week for a



"I wrote a play. I wrote four playsall blanks. Now I'm extremely bitter about anyone who draws a label. That's what it's cost me. Only since I fell in love with you have I got to appreciate the taste of these kippers. I don't care now who eats caviare."

She was not in a mood to appreciate this. She had received her part that morning.

It was twenty-eight pages.

During rehearsals, Kathleen Ash felt she was learning something. She could not exactly say what it was. If there had been a label to be found for it, it might have borne the inscription—giving the public what it wants. She learnt that Steele's theatre had what is known as a public. She was informed that that public expected certain things. It expected the ingénue lady to appear as though she were in love with the leading actor. It expected what was called -appeal. It expected the attitude of a young woman in the love interest of the play, to be as submissive as quarried stone to a blasting charge. It expected to be robbed, or stripped would be a better word, of all the illusions of love in order to clothe itself with some flimsy conception that life, for the moment at any rate, was worth living. In a word, it wanted its money's worth and the policy of Steele's theatre was to obtain, through the window of the box office, as much of that money as was available.

In the course of learning that this method of acting was the only possible school for a young woman likely to become a star, Kathleen Ash discovered that Gordon Steele was falling in love with her.

For the first two weeks of rehearsal, the passionate love scene with which the third act culminated was taken on the stage in the presence of the whole company. Then one day, a week before production, the assistant stage manager said:

"The chief wants you to stay on for a bit and go through that scene in the third act

again."

He gave them all the call for the next day and Kathleen remained. They went through the scene twice with the assistant stage manager absorbed in the prompt copy.

Up to then, and even till the last dress rehearsal, the kiss he had to give her, in accordance with the author's stage directions, was administered with closed lips, and not fully on her own. But at the last dress rehearsal not only did he give his lips direct to hers, but she thought she detected something more alive, something less static in his embrace. It seemed, too, that for the

rest of the play he was watching for some response of recognition. She offered none. It had been quite unnecessary to advise her to leave sentiment outside on the pavement. She took herself quite seriously and would no more have thought of bringing sentiment to her work than of carrying a Pekinese dog.

"Let yourself go a little more in that scene," he said to her afterwards, "and you'll be the talk of London the day after tomorrow. I'm going out to have some supper. Will vou come?"

She gave him a convincing registration of surprise. .

"I don't want to be that sort of talk," she said—"I thought you meant my playing of the part would be the talk of London.

He found it difficult to convince her that that was what he had meant. And in the end she went off to the stables in Soho and had a kipper.

"Are you going to say exactly what you think to-morrow night?" she asked Bobby.

"It's the only joy I have besides proposing to you. And after to-morrow night I anticipate even that will be taken from me. I shall have drawn my last blank and become the perfect critic with no illusions about life at all."

In the culminating scene of the third act the first night the audience at Steele's theatre were fully aware that they were being offered a new romance concerning their unmarried This was what they wanted. was what they were being given within the limited confines of three acts which had contrived the passing of the Censor and were being presented to them as a contribution to the English stage.

When Lord Haverford, four years married, discovered that he loved his wife and told her so, there was not one member of the feminine part of that audience that did not feel convinced they were witnessing the crowning love story of their unmarried idol's This was what they called entertain- ${
m He}$ had what was known ment. "appeal." The appeal. And this—what was her name? They looked at their programmes. This Kathleen Ash, she had it too.

They could imagine when he kissed her that it was a real kiss. That was the impression they had paid for. That was the impression they received. And that was what actually happened. They did not hear him whisper under his breath as he held her in his arms, "I do love you," but taking everything into consideration and allowing for the inferior grinding of the lenses in these opera glasses you hire in the theatre, that was what they would have expected. And that was what he did.

When the curtain fell at the end of the play and there was a chorus of voices in the gallery calling for Kathleen Ash, Steele stood in the wings with her, saying:

"I told you you'd make your name."

He nodded to the stage manager and the curtain went up for her. When the curtain went up again for his speech, he came down to the footlights and, if hearts could be heard beating without the contrivance of a stethoscope, there would have been something in the nature of a tumult in the theatre.

"I am glad," he said, "that you have realised the splendid performance of Miss

Kathleen Ash."

He said something extremely kind about the play and the rest of the company. It was the modest speech of a modest man at a moment when modesty is the clinching virtue. The last fall of the curtain heralded another success in the long, unbroken line of successes at Steele's theatre.

He called Kathleen Ash into the reception room where they had had their first interview. He closed the door, walked down the room, as men walk in silence when they dare not trust themselves to speak. At the door into his dressing-room he turned round on his heel. Silence was no longer possible. But in those situations he knew the dramatic value of the whole length of a room between himself and the woman he was loving at the moment. It had the "appeal" in it. It gave what might be called the mental atmosphere of a strong man—an atmosphere of vital and devastating currents running to earth between him and the object of his emotions.

"Did you hear what I said?" he asked.

" When ? "

"That scene."

"Which scene?"

He laughed—very gently—affectionately almost, because he saw her fencing for time as he knew women did when time was wonderful.

"Do you want me to say it again?" he asked.

"Not yet."

"Why not yet? Why not now and sixty thousand times now?"

He had always found that "sixty thousand" was an effective, a dramatic number, far more dramatic than a thousand, a million,

or even a hundred times. He had never tried to explain it to himself. He used "sixty thousand" by instinct. And it was always effective.

"Because I want to wait till after tomorrow."

" Why ? "

"I want to see what the papers say. You say I've made my name. I want to see what they say about that."

She went home to the Ash household and sat eating cress-and-egg sandwiches till half-past twelve and talking to her father about matters of plain fact in the City, refusing to talk about the play—giving him a piece of her sandwich to bite; taking a sip of his whisky—making a face and then going to bed.

They brought the papers up to the bedroom with her breakfast in the morning. She poured out her tea, put some mustard on the plate of bacon, cut a piece of the meat ready to put in her mouth and then opened just one paper. Above the initials R. B. she read:

"This is the kind of play that makes the rents of theatres nowadays so exorbitant. It will fill Steele's theatre for many months."

There followed a paragraph about the economic condition of the theatre in its relation to the drama.

"Miss Kathleen Ash"—her eye had leapt the paragraph like a water jump, cleared the fences and was coming into the straight -" Miss Kathleen Ash has made a name for herself by her excellent presentation of the part of Lady Haverford. It happens frequently that an actor or an actress brings something in life-blood to a part which it does not possess of itself. Miss Ash has done this. She has animated a lifeless character with the human touch of her personality, and having made a name for herself in this part of Lady Haverford, we must expect to see her offered up as a blood sacrifice to the economic faith of the theatre on the altar of the box office. I was profoundly stirred by her performance. Welcome, Miss Kathleen Ash-welcome and farewell."

None of the notices were any too good. They were of the kind to aggravate a playwright and incense the management until it saw how the box office was reacting to them. Criticisms in the papers, however, did not affect the Steele public. When Kathleen arrived at the theatre that night, the chief was in the best of spirits. The libraries had made a big deal and again he played the love

scene with considerable realism. Her lips were bruised with his kisses and again that moment as she lay in his arms, he whispered, "What are you going to say to me to-morrow?"

She wanted two kippers that night, she said, in the long room over the stables.

"I didn't expect to see you again," said Bobby. "I was writing you a lover's parting. We younger critics often write love letters in our reviews. Haven't you noticed that?"

She lifted the backbone very carefully out of the first kipper before she said:

"Aren't you going to try and save me, then? Are you just waiting for the—obloquies?"

"You mean—obsequies."

"Probably. That shouldn't alter my question to anyone with sense."

"How can I save you? If Steele's not in love with you now, he will be to-morrow. His public is waiting for it. He can't afford to disappoint them. His rent is £450 a week. How can I save you?"

"Ask me the third time," said Kathleen.

"Kathleen Ash-will you marry me?"

"Come and dance," she said.



IN THE GREEN WOOD.

In the green wood, by a green slope, The nightingale was tuning up Before his full orchestrals broke:
And it was golden three o'clock:
Three of the green May afternoon,
As it were white of the full moon.

Out of the green by threes and twos Came little folk in soundless shoes, Quiet and shy and hand in hand, Glad little folks from Elfin land. The blue cap of a hyacinth bell Their pale hair might adorn it well.

Now hear the nightingale his trill!

O darling thrush, for once be still!

Linnet and finch, forget to sing.

For now's the magical hour and thing

When on the wings of a song are flown

Mortals to the Immortal One.

O blackbird, shout no more, for all The listening world is taken in thrill. Listen to the immortal strain Of all that rapture, all that pain That toss the heart high as the lark To the starred Heaven and the blue dark.

In the green wood my eyes were wet,

My heart goes crying and soaring yet.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

HOW TO SELECT A TEST TEAM

By JACK HOBBS

Surrey County Cricket Club

LL the indications point to the public interest in cricket being greater this summer than ever before. The coming visit of a powerful Australian side, the fact that we have lost so many test matches against Australia since the war, a natural anxiety to restore the prestige of English cricket, and the belief that we have quite a good prospect of doing so, have all served to heighten interest in the national summer game.

This situation has therefore its satisfactory features, but of one thing I am certain—it does not tend to make the task of the English selectors any the easier. For some time unofficial selectors have been busy offering their assistance to the committee responsible for the choice of the team, but most of them show an amusing ignorance of, or indifference to, the considerations which must be present when the naming of the England XI is undertaken. These considerations are many and complex, and in setting forth most of them it is not easy to give them their due order of precedence.

Certainly not the least important is the player's mentality—what is commonly called the "big match temperament." A lot of batsmen get runs in county matches and yet fail hopelessly in the bigger game. We see it frequently in football as well as in cricket—players who build up a great reputation in club games and are utterly unable to reproduce the same form in international matches.

The whole atmosphere of international cricket is different from that of the county game. The strain is greater when you know that all the eyes of the cricket world are upon you. Playing with their own club-mates in the midst of surroundings wholly familiar to them is a great help to many young cricketers who are far more affected than others by the translation to the keenness

and trying accompaniments of test cricket.

I often liken the difference between county and international cricket to the difference between club and county cricket. Indeed, I am not sure that the difference in the first case is not greater than in the second. That is the reason why so many cricketers, good cricketers too, fail to rise to the full height of their talents in the tests and are written down as unsuccessful. A matter of nerves it must be —temperament, as we call it nowadays. That is why the psychology of the player must be taken into account when the time of selection comes round.

Of course experience counts. It cannot be expected that a young cricketer in his first test match should play with the same confidence as he does later, and whether he succeeds or fails at the first essay frequently depends not so much upon the real skill he possesses as upon his ability to keep his nerve, to maintain a level head.

When I first started playing in international cricket it always seemed a much greater occasion than it does to-day. I remember a cricketer who afterwards played many notable games for England telling me that in his first few test matches he seemed wholly unable to play his strokes in his usual fashion. He knew how each ball should be treated and he knew that in county cricket he would have dealt with the same balls confidently and well. But for some time brain and eye would not work harmoniously together.

Nobody was more conscious of his defects than himself and nobody was more sure that he could do better. This is the temperament that succeeds, and given a certain measure of luck at the start he eventually triumphed. He explained to me that he became so critical of his own defects and became so interested in the study that he forgot his surroundings, and by the time he again realised that he was playing in a test match he had recovered his sureness and mastery.

That little bit of luck at the start—how much it means to all of us! I sometimes wonder whether the public who watch our doings realise how little there sometimes is between a batsman's "duck" and his century. I think all cricketers do. Sometimes a greater measure of skill gets one out when an inferior batsman would stay Take the case of the batsman who intends to cut a rather difficult ball; he just snicks it and is perhaps caught at the wicket or in the slips. A less gifted batsman would probably miss it altogetherand escape. This phase of cricket is reflected in the sayings common among players: "He played too well" or "He cannot play well enough to get out."

I am convinced that a test match in England is a very much bigger trial for an English player than one overseas. right in the atmosphere of strain, which is intensified by the criticism, in case of failure, of those with whom he wishes to stand well. Overseas the criticism reaches him later and only at second hand, and it is modified by the critic's fear that he does not know all the circumstances. At home the critic is not restrained by any such consideration. Also on tour a player is one of about sixteen, and even in the event of failure he knows pretty well that he must be selected for the next test and will have further opportunity to retrieve his reputation. In England, where the choice is so wide, he who fails may have to wait a long time for another chance to prove that his sponsors have not blundered.

The present is a particularly trying time for the young England cricketer new to test matches. England has been the "underdog" for so long and the home Press has been so busily engaged proving that the Australians are super-cricketers that it will be no wonder if our young players find battling with Australia a severer trial than it should be. Our Press critics at home should realise that, and be generous towards any of our young players who may be selected for this season's tests. Let the critics say what they like about the older members of the side, such as myself -if I should be selected again. We have been through the mill and can take success or failure philosophically.

But encouragement is what our young players should get from our own Press, coupled with a reiteration of what I firmly believe to be the truth—that our young men are no whit behind the Australians. When I ask for the charity and support of our home Press I have a good precedent in the present Australian touring side, for I saw that before their departure from Australia a similar appeal was made to the Australian Press on their behalf. We do not want a repetition of 1921, when the members of the England elevens—and the selectors—were so violently criticised.

I would emphasise that one failure does not prove that the selectors have made a bad choice. Any one of us may have a bad match. I remember after a run of big scores last season I was dismissed twice in the match against Lancashire at the Oval for 8 runs. But Surrey did not leave me out of the next match. I am not aware that such a step was ever discussed.

In the matter of selection averages are of little good as a guide, and to have any virtue at all they must be considered over a period of more than one season. Also we must try to eliminate a "tail"; our later batsmen must be able to get a few runs. The difference in this respect between the two sides during the last tour in Australia turned the balance against us. I should say that with the exception of Grimmett, a century from any one of the Australian players is always a possibility. Our English bowlers, I am afraid, too readily assume that runs are not expected of them.

Another point to bear in mind is that England cannot afford to have bad fielders. Such a one, apart from his own mistakes and deficiencies, has a bad moral effect on the team. A bad fieldsman must be absolutely indispensable in either batting or bowling to be chosen—so brilliant in his special line that he simply cannot be left out.

I would also like to see among our cricketers generally more interchangeability in the field. The system which always places a county cricketer in the same position in the field is too rigidly adhered to. No doubt it is a great temptation to a captain when he has a fieldsman who is notably skilful in the slips or the long field to keep him in his regular position, but a good fieldsman in one position will be a good fieldsman anywhere, so long as the necessary physical attributes in each case are



JACK HOBBS.

Photograph by Reginald Haines, supplied by Central News.

there. I noticed during last season that Yorkshire had gone some way towards breaking away from the system by Herbert Sutcliffe and Percy Holmes taking slip and the long field, third man or mid-on, during alternate overs. It saved a good deal of changing over and, as both are good fields, had no detrimental effect upon the work of Yorkshire as a team.

When I first played in Surrey Club and Ground matches I fielded at slip, put there by Mr. W. T. Graburn, the old coach at the Oval who captained the side. He thought I ought to have started fielding there when I played for the county, though he confessed a few weeks ago that he would rather not see me there now. I cannot understand why, as I do not think I disgraced myself and would not have let the side down if fielding there in recent years. A cricketer who can do justice to himself in more than one fielding position should be a useful man for a captain to have.

This reminds me that much has been said about the captaincy of our test teams with which I do not find myself in agreement. Some writers have even gone so far as to say that the choice of a captain is the most important of all, and therefore the first task to which the selectors should apply themselves. Far from endorsing that view, I think the importance of captaincy in test matches is generally exaggerated. I would go so far as to say that a good testmatch side almost skippers itself, and in that respect is frequently different from the county side. I would not therefore have a captain who was not worth his place in the team on playing ability alone, either as batsman or bowler or on all-round ability. He must of course be possessed of good ordinary intelligence and knowledge in the cricket sense. Given a test team of good cricketers, my belief is that any one of half a dozen would make an acceptable captain.

Physical fitness must also be considered by the selectors and players must be encouraged to keep themselves up to concert pitch. It must be impressed upon our test players that anything in the nature of immoderate indulgence in anything that impairs their stamina or activity in the field is an offence against the side. I have seen instances of this, especially during tours abroad, which have been regrettable. I would not convey that anything of this nature has been characteristic of English touring teams. Far from it. The great

majority of our cricketers are abstemious and well-conducted men, as much so I would say as any body of sport players that visit our shores. But even one player in a touring side who is indifferent to the general code of behaviour necessary to perfect fitness may have a bad effect that is not confined to himself. The point is also not unworthy of consideration when selecting elevens at home.

The selection of bowlers demands the utmost care. There should be five good bowlers; fewer you cannot do with and more are not wanted. It is another saying with us cricketers that "if you cannot get 'em out with five bowlers you won't with six." A fast bowler is always useful, supported by a left-arm bowler for a sticky wicket, a slow leg-break, "googly" or "funny" bowler, and two good medium or medium-fast bowlers. If you have two fast bowlers of the class of McDonald and Gregory of the Australian team of 1921. all the better, though it should always be remembered that Gregory is more than a fast bowler. You can never be sure when the lengthy "Cornstalk" comes in to bat that he will be got out under a century, and he is one of the finest slip fielders seen for a long time.

A hitter of the Jessop type is a useful man on a side. He is never done with until on his way back to the pavilion—a potential match winner at any stage of an innings. Only a Jessop could have turned the fortunes of that game against the Australians at the Oval in 1902 so swiftly and so dramatically. Old cricketers still refer to it as the most thrilling cricket spectacle they ever saw. Such men are of especial value in a three-day test match in which many more solid batsmen are useless.

Let us have no talk about amateur or professional. What we want is our best eleven, the side with the best chance of winning back the "Ashes," no matter what proportion of amateurs and professionals it contains. Also whenever a player gets a century or half-century against one of our weakest bowling counties it does not help to be assailed by clamorous appeals for his inclusion in the next test-match team. The selectors will no doubt give such performances their due appreciation and are probably in a position to do so as accurately as the outside critics.

It will be as difficult to know whom to leave out as to select. But one thing we must have in all our players, and that is the determination to win if at all possible and to fight from the first ball to the last. If I call the necessary quality "Yorkshire grit" I am paying a big compliment to the Northern shire. We shall be opposed by the same spirit and our fieldsmen must be on their toes all the time, as keen at the close of each day as when they first step on the field.

And in this connection I would advocate that all the selected players should have a rest before each test match. Such a spell of idleness has often a most wholesome effect in preventing staleness and bringing a man to the game fit and zealous to give his utmost throughout the three days. It is most beneficial to the members of the eleven who are not so young as some of the others.

In the test matches also I would favour all the players, amateur and professional, using the same dressing-room if the accommodation is suitable. There should be every opportunity for intercourse and exchange of ideas and plans. There is much scope during the progress of a match for "talking it over," discussing the best way to deal with a bowler, considering the alteration of the order of going in or discussing plans to get particular batsmen out. The arrangements on several of our grounds, if the class distinction is adhered to, makes access so difficult that it prevents complete interchangeability of opinions. Also assuming that there is a preponderance of professionals in a side, the accommodation for each member of the eleven can seldom be well apportioned.

It will be seen, therefore, that the task of the selectors before an eleven is chosen and placed on the field is not a light one if it is to be done well and our resources made the most of. And to get the best out of our available talent is what is necessary if we are to restore the international prestige of English cricket.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

THERE is only one house in the lane of my desire,
Where the wealth of the apple-trees drifts down like snow,
Where the wallflowers stand like a border of scented fire,
And pale primroses grow.

There is only one house in the lane, and, when dusk falls, Like a black-edged silver wave, on the shadowed hill, And birds are empty of song save where the blackbird calls, The house lies very still.

Over there where the apple-trees hang one night I saw,
As the moon shook a shining rain from her finger-tips,
A shape like a dream reach wistfully up, and draw
The blossom to her lips.

Hark! Was that a step on the lawn? Did not the grass Shudder and bend just there and suddenly rise again? Did you feel no breath on your face? Did no one pass Lightly as Summer rain?

There is only one house in the lane and perhaps—who knows?—
To-night we shall learn its long hidden mysteries
And shall see the bewildering ghost who comes and goes
Lovely beneath the trees.

THE RIVER OF LITTLE FISHES

By ARTHUR MILLS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

THIS is a story of a waterway in South America known as the Rua das

Some say that this title was bestowed on account of the terrible fevers that lurk in the Brazilian interior and are said to flourish with particular virulence about the river's banks. Others have it that the name originated on account of the river passing through the territory of the Chavantes Indians who kill all who attempt communication with them.

Whatever the reason, even the most experienced travellers do not venture lightly on a voyage down the River of the Dead.

Harry Dobell, however, sitting on a mouldering bench outside Epina's only liquor store, was in the humour to walk barefoot through hell.

He looked sourly across the barren, earthtrampled plaza at a handful of passengers just landed from the bi-weekly train, then unfastened the top button of his shirt, peered inside, and secured and removed the insect that was biting him.

It was a garrapato and by no means the last of its race, as witness the abominable itching around his ankles. But he was not going to take off his boots. He had worn them now three days and they could stay on a few more hours. His shirt he might have to remove, for the fabric was becoming rotten. However, he intended to wear that as long as possible, for he could ill afford another, having little money in the belt drawn tightly round his stomach. his revolver was worth a hundred dollars; but he would not part with that, for it had a nice balance and would be difficult to replace in those parts.

Holy Mike! But Epina was a hole for a white man to find himself in.

He took a stick of black plug from his

pocket and some coarse brown cigarettepapers. Drawing a knife from his belt, he began to prepare a cigarette.

"May I offer you one of mine, sir?" Dobell looked up. A little chap wearing a spruce drill suit and horn-rimmed spectacles stood beside him. He would be one of those who had arrived by the bi-weekly train. A small trader, most likely, though what business he hoped to transact in those outlandish parts was beyond Dobell's comprehension.

Dobell accepted a cigarette and the stranger sat down beside him.

"Could you tell me where I could find a Mr. Harold Dobell?" he asked.

"Why?" asked Dobell, his eyes hardening. He had not left the Argentine and come up to Matto Grosso entirely for his health.

"My name is Wilks," said the stranger. "I have a letter to Mr. Dobell and I was told in Rio de Janeiro that he was believed to be somewhere in these parts."

The stranger took a dog-eared envelope from his pocket. Dobell peered over his shoulder and looked at the address. As he saw the handwriting his expression became more reassured.

"That is from Tom Bentley," he said;

"he told me to look out for you."
"You are Mr. Dobell?" The stranger

stared at him. "Why, Bentley told me___" He stopped awkwardly.

Dobell laughed. "—that we were old friends, and you did not expect to find me in rags like this"; he looked down at his torn, muddy clothes. "However, my name. is Dobell, and anything I can do for a friend of Tom Bentley's I'll be very glad to hear about. Let me see what he says." Dobell opened the letter.

"So," he nodded to himself as he read, "you are another of 'em, are you?" He looked at the little man beside him. "What's the goose you are chasing?"

"Goose! I am—ah—a chartered accountant and I have been sent out by a British firm to report on a certain gold-mining enterprise."

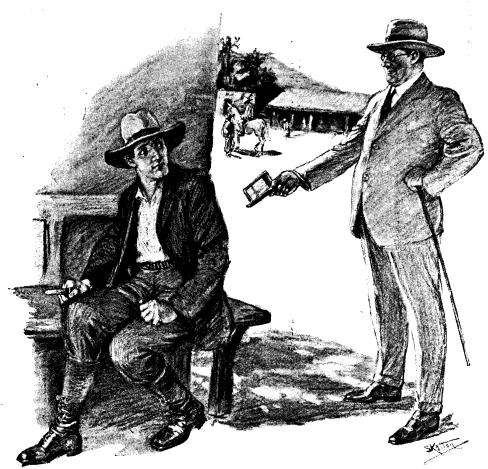
Dobell looked at him. "Are you a mining man?"

"I am not," said Mr. Wilks, "but I was

"The story," he said, "is rather curious. If you will read this document you will see what caused the inception of the mine."

Dobell read.

"In the year 1700 the Inca Chief Athalhualpa, taken prisoner by Ribiero Preto, was burnt as a heretic in the public square of Santa Fé! He died unrepentant, declining to the last to divulge the hiding-place of the



"'May I offer you one of mine, sir?"

told I should be able to get technical advice on these matters on the spot. For example, Mr. Bentley very kindly gave me this letter to you; he said you had—ah—experience as a mining engineer."

"Maybe I have," said Dobell. "Well now, what is this property you are interested

in 2 ',

Mr. Wilks felt in his pocket and produced another dog-eared envelope from which he extracted a piece of paper. vessels of gold used in his idolatrous temples and calling upon the gods of the River of the Dead to avenge him."

"Do you mean someone has discovered where this Inca gold is hidden?" asked Dobell.

"No; but they have discovered where the raw gold was originally found and, I understand, have come across some old Inca workings. At any rate, a proper mine has now been established with up-to-date machinery, and it is the future prospects of this enterprise that I have come out to investigate."

"What's the mine called?" asked Dobell.

"In London the Company is registered as the Ribiero Preto Gold Mines Limited."

"Great Scot!"

"A considerable amount of money is invested in the enterprise," continued Mr. "Many of the shares are distributed among smallholders, farmers, clergymen, retired officers, etc. The mine began well, but has since been doing badly. Last March a report came to the London office that unless further capital was forthcoming, the mine would have to close. Our chairman was much concerned, for to attempt to raise further capital for an-ah- goosechase' as you put it, might mean the ruin of a number of innocent persons. That is, as I explained to you, the reason I have come out."

"Do you know gold quartz from copper

when you see it?

Mr. Wilks drew himself up stiffly. "No, but I believe I am a competent examiner of account books, and that, sir-though not being a business man yourself you may not appreciate the fact—is as important an element in all commercial undertakings as -er-the handling of the actual commodity."

"But—" Dobell stared at the little "What precisely do you want me to do in the matter?'

"Mr. Bentley's idea was that you might -er-associate yourself with me in my investigations on the technical side."

"I see," said Dobell slowly.

"I should add," continued Mr. Wilks, "that my firm authorised me to engage a competent man for this purpose and to pay him at the rates of remuneration usual in such cases."

Mr. Wilks' eye again travelled over his companion, and as he took in his down-atheels appearance he mentally halved the amount he had at first intended to offer.

"What you-er-consider-a would

proper figure?" he asked.

"To go up to the Rua das Mortes?"

Dobell asked.

"Is that where the mine is?" said Mr. Wilks; "that would be then the River of the Dead, that is mentioned in the document I showed you."

Dobell nodded. "The same, and there is a goldfield up there known as Ribiero

Preto."

"Precisely; it is the enterprise in which my company are interested."

"The concern is managed by a fellow called Cavahlo; have you ever met him?"

"No; but of course I have seen his

reports."

"H'm!" Dobell nodded to himself as though he knew something. "All right," he said at length. "I'll go up there for vou."

"With me," corrected Mr. Wilks: "we'll

go up together."

"Oh, you are coming?" Dobell looked over Mr. Wilks from his horn-rimmed spectacles to his thin, unserviceable-looking city shoes. "Well, you know best, but if I were you I should stop here. It is pretty rough going up there, even for anyone who is used to that kind of thing."

"I must go, of course," said Mr. Wilks, his eyes filling with the conscientious look his clerks had learnt to dread when, just on closing time, he declared a ledger must be

checked all through again.

Two days later the chartered accountant and mining engineer set out. "Mining engineer" as applied to Dobell was principally a courtesy title. In the course of his career he had tried his hand at many things. As the world judges these matters, he was, at thirty-three, a failure. But he was also the very man for Mr. Wilks, and this Tom Bentley knew when he heard the nature of Mr. Wilks' business and recommended Dobell to him.

The pair proceeded by mule, taking spare animals, two muleteers, and provisions for a five-days' journey.

Within half an hour of leaving Epina they

were in the heart of virgin jungle.

At night they slept in hammocks. As Mr. Wilks lay looking at the Southern Cross and pale moonlight shining down on tropical Brazil or woke to a golden dawn, revealing valleys bathed in mist, great dewdrops glistening on the grass, huge trees rearing their branches to the skies and the incredibly entangled undergrowth of Brazilian forest lands, some long-forgotten sense of beauty stirred the heart of the little accountant so that he whistled as he washed himself and forgot about the new system of double entry which he was perfecting that year.

It was not until the morning of the fifth day that any adventure happened. came to a broad river. Dobell unsaddled one of the mules and drove him into the water to test the strength of the current. The animal, trained to swim rivers, struck boldly out into the stream. He had not gone very far, however, before he gave a

squeal of fright.

Thinking the mule must be threatened by one of the great water snakes of the interior, Dobell snatched up his gun and climbed on to a high point on the bank. But though the head *caboclo* was gesticulating violently, and pointing at the river, there was no sign of an anaconda.

"Piranha!" shouted the

caboclo.

Looking into the water, Dobell saw a shoal of little fish, shaped like perch and no longer than a man's hand. They were swimming about the mule, seemingly butting the animal with their heads. It seemed impossible that these little fish, scarcely bigger than sprats, could be worrying the animal. Again the mule plunged violently and next moment a trickle of blood discoloured the clear water.

Now an extraordinary and terrible spectacle began. From all quarters of the river tiny fish could be seen swimming furiously towards the creature in the water. They fastened themselves like a thousand leeches upon the mule. The mule's struggles redoubled and it seemed in a frenzy of fear.

"By Jove!" said Wilks, taking off his coat; "we had better help that mule; those little beggars look pretty ferocious for

their size."

The caboclo sprang in front of him, arms outstretched, chattering excitedly in Guarani.

"He says it is no good," said Dobell, laying a restraining hand on Wilks' arm. "He says they are piranha—the little maneating fish of the interior. I have heard of them. When they have tasted blood they become mad and will kill anyone who goes into the water."

"But they are no bigger than sprats."

"They have teeth as sharp as sharks all the same. No, we can do nothing. Though how the devil we are to get across this river, I do not know."

Just then a voice hailed them and looking across the river they saw a man standing on the farther bank.

"There is a place where you can cross a little farther up," the man said, "see, by that clump of trees."

Following his directions they came to what was evidently a regular crossing-place, with a flat-bottomed boat moored to the bank in which they could embark the mules.

Their informant waited for them on the farther side and introduced himself as soon

as they were across.

"My name is Cavahlo," he said, when Wilks had stated his name and business. "I was expecting your arrival. Though posts in these parts are not frequent, I received a letter a day or two ago telling me that you were coming. Well, and what do you think of your first introduction to the River of the Dead?"

"Oh, this is the Rua das Mortes." Wilks looked uncomfortably at the water; he could not rid his mind of the picture of that mule in the midst of his terrible little

enemies.

"Si, señor, and now will you permit me

to conduct you to my house."

They rode on for a league through the forest and came to a small valley sheltering a group of houses; the figures of men could be seen moving from one point to another; smoke issued from a tall chimney; and the purr of machinery floated to their ears.

Cavahlo waved his hand.

"The Ribiero Preto Gold Mine," he announced.

Looking at the fellow, Dobell decided he was as unprepossessing a specimen of humanity as he had yet seen. He stood some 6 feet 2 inches in height, and had the lank black hair of Indian blood; his thick lips and nose were negroid; his face was pitted with smallpox, and his teeth were broken and discoloured.

Nevertheless, like all other Brazilians of the interior, the manager of the Ribiero Preto Gold Mine had the manners of a perfect host.

He conducted the two visitors to his house, showed them their rooms, and said that a meal would be ready in half an hour.

"For to-day you would prefer to rest," he said to Wilks when they were seated at

table.

"I'd like to get on with it," said the chartered accountant briskly.

"As you will." Cavahlo bowed. "We shall begin, then, by going down the mine."

"Capital!" Wilks rubbed his hands. "Though that will be more in the department of my friend here"—he indicated Dobell; "he is a mining expert now; the book work is my branch. But still, I would like to see over the mine too."

"You are an engineer, señor?" Cavahlo turned to Dobell and the latter was instantly aware of hostility in those inky black,

shaft-head.

of maté drinking on the patio, controlled

his surprise, and guided his guests to the

They descended by a modern lift. This,

and such machinery as he had seen outside,

shifty eyes. Dobell decided to change the subject.

"The buried temple of Athalhualpa is supposed to be somewhere in these parts, no?" he asked.

was where the shareholders' money had gone, Dobell supposed. The rock temperature at the bottom of the shaft was 118° and, despite an artificial current, the air at that depth was foul. Four men. stripped to the waist, were plying pick and shovel in a narrow chamber. Sweat poured from their naked backs. Now and again one snatched up a tin "'Don't move, or I shoot!"" Cavahlo smiled. "But that is an old story,

señor. Men have been coming to the Rua das Mortes to look for the temple of Athalhualpa for these last two hundred years, and," he added slowly, "many have remained."

"None had a map of any kind?" Cavahlo shrugged his shoulders. "They have brought maps, directions, secret charts, but none of any value. Foolish-minded persons can always acquire documents stating where buried treasure may be found."

"I suppose so," said Wilks, taking out his watch briskly. "Now, sir, I am at your disposal."

Cavahlo, who anticipated a further hour

canister of water and drank savagely. "There is the lode, you see." Cavahlo held a lantern to the roof. "It is only a few feet wide, but the ore is good and yields

a fair supply of gold."

Dobell picked up a small piece of loose rock and put it in his pocket.

"Of course the quality of the ore varies," said Cavahlo. "Later I will show you our process for extracting the metal."

Dobell felt instinctively that the Brazilian resented his action in taking a sample of the ore.

Later they returned to the surface. Cavahlo showed them over the manufacturing plant, and some finished gold, then he and Wilks went to the office to examine the books.

Dobell said he would wait for them at Cavahlo's house.

The accountant and the mine manager spent a long afternoon among the ledgers. At dinner that night Dobell noticed that Wilks seemed abstracted and puzzled. Presently all three retired to bed.

Wilks slept fitfully. He was, as Dobell surmised, much mystified. He could not reconcile certain figures shown in connection with the working of the mine. In the small hours of the morning he was startled by someone entering his room.

"Who is there?" asked the little accountant, sitting up, his hand feeling for the

the window revealed a man in a suit of grimy overalls, with sweat-stained cheeks, and dust-clotted eyes.

"It is I, Dobell. I have spent the night working with the night shift in the mine."

"In the mine!" "Yes. Listen, the whole mine and apparatus here are one big bluff; the stuff they are digging up is gold-bearing ore of sorts, but so is half the the i n country; it is no more worth sinking a shaft to get than rooting up Pic-cadilly." "But, man.

revolver beneath his pillow; the mechanism of which he barely understood.

"Looking across the river they saw where the orders came from."

"Ssh!" The intruder came close to his bed.

A faint streak of light showing through

we saw the gold ourselves; you remember those ingots in the safe."

Dobell leant closer: "The gold we saw in the safe comes from somewhere else," he whispered. "I am not quite sure myself what the whole business means, but I think by sunset we shall have discovered. Cavahlo went off an hour ago. Our best plan will be to follow him. The *caboclo* can mark his trail."

Half an hour later they set out, riding in single file, the caboclo leading the way. The path they took ran along the bank of the Rua das Mortes. But there was no sign to-day of the terrible little fish; and the limpidly clear, smooth-running river hardly seemed to merit its grisly name.

Presently they came to a point where the river took a curious conformation, sweeping out in a wide loop, encircling a

promontory of land.

For some while now the country had borne evidence of being in the grip of drought, and here on this promontory it seemed it must have been months since rain had fallen. The trees drooped lifelessly; there were fissures in the sun-baked earth; the grass was brown and parched; while the close mesh formed by the undergrowth beneath the larger trees was brittle as match-wood.

The caboclo made a sign.

"The Indian says Cavahlo is somewhere on that promontory," Dobell told Wilks. "Can you use that gun of yours?"

"N-not very well," Mr. Wilks admitted. From this point, owing to the denseness of the undergrowth, the only way of proceeding was by hugging the river-bank and in places swinging themselves out over the edge of the river from tree to tree.

At one place Wilks nearly slipped.

"By Gad," he called to Dobel, "I am glad I did not fall in there. There are some of those beastly little fish, aren't they?" He pointed to the water.

"They certainly are," said Dobell, looking down at a shoal of piranha swimming placidly a few yards from the bank.

"Would they really hurt a man; they

look so tiny?

"I would not try to swim across that river," said Dobell, "if anyone offered me a million pounds. They might let you go across without taking any notice, but if one nipped you and drew blood, heaven help you! There'd be thousands at you in a minute; you'd never get out of the water alive."

"Ugh!" Mr. Wilks shuddered.

They pushed ahead, the caboolo leading, Wilks in the middle, Dobell bringing up the rear.

"Hell!" exclaimed Wilks suddenly, as he tripped over something.

Bending down they found a great flat stone projecting a few inches from the ground.

Dobell examined the stone and pronounced it a bit of Inca masonry. He said that the Incas had the secret of building with huge blocks of stone, before the invention of steam engines, just as the Egyptians did.

A little farther on they came to a clearing right at the very end of the promontory. Here, covering an area of a hundred square yards, were many more great stones like the one Wilks had fallen over; some, fully exposed, were placed in the rough shape of a wall.

"This was an Inca palace or temple," said Dobell. "They chose a good site with a view over the river. I don't think they used safety matches in those days somehow, though they were pretty up to date." He bent down and held up an ordinary wooden match.

Wilks took the match from him. The match had been used and the head was

black, but the rest was intact.

"I gave Cavahlo a box of those yesterday," he exclaimed. "He complained he could get no proper matches in the interior."

Dobell now began carefully examining what had once been the floor of the temple.

"Help clear the earth away here," he

pointed to the ground.

All set to work and presently came upon the flat surface of a stone. In the centre of the stone an ancient ring was fixed. Dobell and the caboclo seized the ring and tugged with all their might. The stone quivered. They pulled again and the stone gave. They found themselves standing over an inky black hole; circular in shape, like the coal-traps in pavements.

Dobell took an electric torch from his pocket and peered into the hole. Then he

looked up.

"I think," he said, "that we are coming to a solution of the mystery. Let me get your end of the stone clear. As I take it gold was found by this man Cavahlo in the area known as the Ribiero Preto Gold Fields and capital raised in London to open a mine and put Cavahlo in charge."

Mr. Wilks nodded.

"Work was begun," Dobell continued, "but no sooner had the plant been installed than the yield of gold became a negligible quantity. The director threatened to close down the mine, when suddenly the yield improved again. On this fresh capital was raised; the yield dropped to zero

again; now Cavahlo has demanded more money, and before this is supplied you have been sent out to look into things."

"That is the position exactly," said Wilks.
"Well, the answer lies here," Dobell waved his hand around the clearing. "This is where any gold that has been found came from."

"I don't understand," said Wilks.

"There, as you see, are the remains of an Inca temple," Dobell explained. a great deal of nonsense is talked and written about the discovery of buried treasure in huge quantities. The facts are more often that stray bits of gold are found where the Incas once lived. This place has probably been ransacked before in years gone by. Cavahlo came upon it and found a bit of gold here and there; but not in a quantity to make his fortune. However, he used what he did discover to feed a mine which has proved worthless from the start, smelting what he gets out of here in with the barren ore. In this way he assures himself a regular and substantial income from the shareholders of the mine, which he appropriates for his own use. You said you were not satisfied with the books."

"I certainly was not," said Wilks. "I could not reconcile the expenditure sheet with the work that was being done. However, as some gold seemed to have been extracted, I was hesitating how to word my

report."

"Now you know," said Dobell quietly. "Well, shall we just take a look down here?" He pointed to the cavern.

"Don't move, or I shoot!"

The command was given with the ring of absolute authority.

"Put up your hands!"

Looking across the river they saw where the orders came from. Cavahlo stood on the opposite bank, facing the temple. He held a rifle to his shoulder.

"Take your revolvers and throw them in the river. One at a time. Do not both draw at once. You first!" Cavahlo swung his rifle on Dobell. "And be careful to hold it by the barrel. I do not care to see your

finger too near the trigger."

There was nothing for it but to obey. "And now, gentlemen," said Cavahlo, "may I ask to what cause I am indebted for your visit to this outlying part of my property? And why, Señor Dobell, did you pay a secret visit to my mine last night after I had already shown you all that was necessary?"

"You know very well," said Dobell. Cavahlo glared at him. "The mine, perhaps, you had the right to examine, but the place where you stand now is a little discovery that I have made. It belongs to me. In the old Colonial days they had a punishment for those that interfered with the property of another. They were taken to the nearest town and there burnt publicly."

"It is a pity you weren't living then,"

Mr. Wilks said indignantly.

Dobell laid a restraining hand on his arm. "It is, as you say, a pity," said Cavahlo blandly, "but not for the reason you suggest. However, I have made the best arrangements I could to maintain our old customs. If you look behind you, you will understand my meaning."

Dobell looked round. Half a mile behind he saw a great bank of smoke licked by red

tongues of fire.

"My God! the forest is alight," he shouted.

"Yes, or just the portion of it that affects the promontory on which you stand. I told my men not to burn more than they could help, but with this dry season it is difficult for them to make exact calculation."

Their situation was now apparent With the fire roaring towards them, borne by a fair breeze, it was impossible to go back the way they had come.

"We shall have to swim for it," said Wilks,

"and chance his shooting at us."

"Swim!" said Dobell, "in that river alive with piranha!"

Both men looked at one another. The devilishness of Cavahlo's plan was now plain. There would be no need for him to shoot if they entered the river! Those little fish, of which shoals could be seen swimming just below the surface, would do the work for him in far more deadly fashion.

The forest fire was drawing nearer. They could already feel the heat in the air that caressed their cheeks. Death was inevitable; it was for them to choose whether they would be burnt alive, or eaten alive.

Cavahlo lit a cigarette and flung the match in the water. A score of the savage little fish rushed at the match to turn from it contemptuously.

"The little gods of the River of the Dead seem hungry to-day," he said, looking at the water.

The fire now was drawing nearer, momentarily gathering intensity. Below the smoke

screen a wall of living flame crept towards them. The smoke screen, driven by the wind, travelled a full hundred yards ahead.

An idea came to Dobell; there would be a period, very short it was true, but still perhaps just long enough, when the smoke screen would hide them from view from the opposite bank. This would be before the flame came round them. Flinging his jacket on the ground he tore off his shirt and dipped it in the water, taking care to keep his hand out of reach of the savage little fish, who flew at the shirt only to turn aside disgustedly as they had from the match.

Cavahlo watched.

"So you prefer the flames," he called; "that shirt will not save you long."

Then the smoke screen descended upon them.

"Quick!" said Dobell. "Get down that hole. Do as I tell you. Don't argue, man; we have only a minute."

The smoke hid them completely from the opposite bank. Just as the flames were upon them they managed to descend the cave and pull the stone back into place. Then the fire roared over them.

How long they remained down there, neither ever knew. A time came when it

seemed that instead of being burnt alive with good honest flames, they had chosen to be roasted. As the fire roared overhead the cave grew like an oven.

At last Dobell cautiously raised the stone and put his head through the hole through which they had crawled. The fire was nearly over, only smouldering embers littered the ground above their hiding-place.

To his astonishment he saw a pair of legs. Raising his head a fraction more he perceived Cavahlo. His back was turned and he was raking about among the ashes, no doubt trying to find evidence of the execution of his foul plans. His ankles were within hands' reach of Dobell.

A moment later, Wilks below heard a loud cry. Then a shot rang out; then silence; after a pause he heard a splash and, coming to the mouth of the cave, saw something in the water—a mangled something around which thousands of tiny fishes fought furiously.

Dobell explained.

"I put out my hands, tripped him, got his gun, and shot him before he could get up. Then I chucked him in the river; it was the best place. 'Pon my life, I had forgotten all about those infernal fish."



AT WINCHESTER COLLEGE.

We walked in Winchester at June's beginning,
Where green of playing-fields met grey-green stone,
And heard the cuckoo, like a blast of beauty,
From unscaled ramparts o'er the ages blown.

With sweet insistence, from his flowering fastness, He called to those who wander here no more; Who passed in springtime, by the way of battle, To tread, triumphant, an enduring floor.

More than white cloister and lone hearts enshrine them; Warriors as noble follow in the van. Yearly, the cuckoo cries aloud, proclaiming At Winchester that "Manners makyth man."

ETHEL M. HEWITT.



INGPEN MAKES MUSIC

By WILLIAM CAINE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

HOUGH Ingpen, because of certain strokes of good fortune (which need not here be specified), had considerably more money to his credit in his bank than has the average junior clerk, he remained habitually thrifty. Under great temptation he would part with money in lumps, but unnecessary small disbursements worried him. And so when his summer holiday came round, instead of embarking on a motor-bicycle tour of Great Britain, he rode his machine to Shoremouth and there settled down in the Beau Site Boarding-House. It is cheaper, you see, to live

by the week than to pay a bill every morning in a different hotel. From Shoremouth he explored by day Dorset, Devon, Hants, Wilts, and even parts of Gloucestershire. By night he played the pianola of the Beau Site Boarding-House.

To most of us the joyous possibilities of life open out but gradually. Ingpen had attained to man's estate without ever having shot lions, drunk champagne, played polo, smoked a Corona, gone racing, attended a prize-fight, or flown. He had still a lot to learn about pleasure. Nor had he ever made music. At the Beau Site Boarding-House

the opportunity was given him of adding in this direction to his experience and he took it enthusiastically.

The month being May, the Beau Site Boarding-House was much fuller of room than of company. Besides Ingpen, indeed, there were but three other guests, one of whom was a girl. Ingpen being the only young man in sight, this girl was agreeable to him and on the first evening of his stay persuaded him to attempt the pianola. executed "Stars and Stripes Forever" and the world was suddenly changed around Talk about heady rapture! The girl was forgotten. Miss Ovens herself had to be called in to arrest the remorseless pedalling of the neophyte with mention of her eleven-o'clock rule. Next evening Ingpen was at work before the coffee had been served in the lounge.

The girl's popularity with her father and mother suffered a complete eclipse. Ingpen knew nothing about that. He was busy grinding out tunes. Like every other pianolist, he was convinced that he worked the pianola better than anyone alive. This belief made him very happy and quite blind to the misery of his companions. But we needn't waste time over them. For this story we have to get back to Notting Town.

When, at the end of his fortnight, Ingpen returned to the house of Mrs. Eccles, he was so fond of pianola-playing that he lost not a moment in visiting the music-shop of Mr. Chandler.

Mr. Chandler gladly undertook the quest which was suggested to him, with the result that, a week later, there was a player-piano in Ingpen's bed-sitting-room, a player-piano for which, plus one dozen rolls, Ingpen had paid not less than five-and-twenty pounds.

Five-and-twenty pounds for a playerpiano and one dozen rolls is a very reasonable price, very reasonable indeed; and Ingpen thought himself every bit as lucky as Mr. Chandler said he was. It is true that the tone of the instrument was not what it had been, and that it was past tuning; but Ingpen had never so much as heard of tone and what he knew about pitch wasn't worth knowing. So long as all the notes of his piano made really loud sounds when struck and so long as the sustainingpedal-stop worked satisfactorily, Ingpen had nothing but praises for his piano, because it fulfilled all the conditions of which he could think. As for the one dozen rolls, most of them were in pretty good condition. Only one was what you could call a real

dud, and this, very fortunately, was nothing but "Selections from Parsifal." There were at least four Foxtrots to which hardly any exception could be taken. Of the other seven rolls three were what you'd call quite good and the rest were all right in places. The best of the dozen—what luck!—was "Ma Blue-eyed Nigger Mammy," the finest tune, in Ingpen's opinion, that had ever been written.

For a week after its arrival the piano worked as hard for its living, I dare say, as it had ever worked in its life—between the hours, at any rate, of half-past seven and half-past ten each night. During each day, to be sure, it enjoyed complete leisure; but once Ingpen's evening meal was eaten, the piano had to get and stay busy, with its pedal down and its motor working prestissimo. Then, for three hours, Ingpen was as happy as a lord in liquor.

Mrs. Eccles, who spent her evenings in her kitchen at the back of the house, was glad to think that her decent young lodger should be amusing himself so pleasantly. Having sat through his repertoire three times, she, personally, had had enough of it; but then she had never cared very much for music. And now, in her kitchen, she could hardly hear the piano at all. It wasn't till the end of the first week that it occurred to her, suddenly, that perhaps her next-door neighbours mightn't be so circumstanced.

She knew that these next-door neighbours were a Mr. Jennison and his daughter, and that this Mr. Jennison was supposed to be a writer of some sort.

"Dear me!" she reflected, rolling paste for the morrow's pie, "I do hope Mr. Ingpen's not annoying them with his music. He does rather keep on like, and he does rather let his piano have it. I wonder if I hadn't better give him a hint not to be quite so persistent, bless him! I don't want any complaints to be made, and his playing must sound terrific through the wall, which you can hear a cough through it easy."

She finished what she was doing and then went to Ingpen's rooms, the hour being about half-past nine.

"It's come into my mind, Mr. Ingpen," she said without any preliminaries (for this was her simple way), "it's come into my mind that you may be playing your piano rather more than our neighbours will care about. For meself I don't mind how much noise you make, so long as you're happy

and don't play after half-past ten, as we agreed. But then I'm in me kitchen and can't hardly hear you at all. But I'm afraid Mr. Jennison and his daughter next door, through this wall "-and she laid her hand upon it-"may be having a bit more of it than they wish. Him being a writer, you know."

Ingpen had gone pale. "Oh, Heavens!" he said. "Do you know, I never thought of Not once. I give you me word, Mrs. Eccles, I never did. I say, this is a bit chronic. I don't want to annoy anybody, but how am I to play my piano without making a noise?"

"Well, of course you can't," said Mrs. "And I wouldn't ask you to. All I want is just to say that I think you'd act more considerate, perhaps, if you didn't play quite all every evening. Do it, say, for an hour. Anybody can stick anything for an hour. But three's perhaps a bit overdoing it, don't you think?"

"Has this Mr. Jennison said anything to

you?" Ingpen inquired.

"No," she said, "not yet. But I expect he will, unless you let up a bit. It isn't everyone as is as fond of music as what you are, Mr. Ingpen, and him being a writer as well-"

"I tell you what," said Ingpen, "I'll go in there now and ask if I'm disturbing him. I wouldn't do that for anything. Why, I couldn't be happy, playing in here, if I thought I was annoying people. believe I'd rather give me piano up. expect I have been going a bit stronger, too, than I oughter, perhaps. But I never thought. Don't you think it'd be a good thing if I was to go in and tell them I'm sorry if I've been a nuisance, and won't do it so much for the future?"

"Well," said Mrs. Eccles, "I won't say that I think it could do any harm."

Ingpen glanced into the mirror of the overmantel and smoothed his hair back. "I'll go this minute," he said.

"MR. JENNISON isn't in," said the maid,

"but Miss Jennison is, if she'll do."
"Yes," said Ingpen, "I expect she'll do, if I can have two words with her, please. Just say I'm the gentleman from Mrs. Eccles's next door who plays the piano and I'd be happy if she'll give me a minute."

Shortly afterwards he was ushered into a room on the first floor that was lined with books from carpet to ceiling. It was lit by one reading-lamp which stood on a revolving bookcase close to a large arm-chair. Out of this arm-chair rose, as Ingpen came in, a very pretty dark-haired girl apparently about eighteen years old.

She advanced beaming and with outstretched hand upon her visitor. "How very nice!" she said. "My father will be

so sorry to miss you, Mr.——"

"Ingpen!"

"Thank you, Mr. Ingpen. He had to go out to-night, so I've been enjoying your delightful music all alone. I can't hear it quite so clearly up here, but this room is so much cosier than the one downstairs. you know."

"You meantersay," Ingpen inquired, rosy with delight and surprise, "that you like

my playing?"

"Like it! I should think so. When you're playing my father and I just sit entranced. It's a perfect concert you give us every evening. And you do play so

beautifully."

"Well," said Ingpen, "I'm very happy to hear you say that. The fact is, it had just occurred to me that perhaps I might be rather disturbing you, the walls of these houses being so very thin. And I wouldn't be a nuisance to anybody for anything. But if you say you like it, why, that's quite all right, isn't it? and I can carry on as

"Oh, but you must," she cried after the briefest of pauses. "Please, please, don't stop. Why, it's our greatest pleasure in life, listening to you. We're both devoted to music, you know. I only wish we had a pianola, like you. I absolutely long to play the pianola.'

"Well, I'm sure," said Ingpen inevitably, "I'd be most happy if you and Mr. Jennison would come in one evening and have a

try on mine."

"Do you really mean that?" she cried, clasping her hands. "Yes? Oh, how splendid! And of course we'll come. How about to-morrow?"

"Fine!" said Ingpen.

"When? Half-past seven? That's your usual time for beginning, isn't it?"

"That's right," said Ingpen. "Any time

after then I'll expect you.

"Good!" she said; "but do sit down and have a drink and a cigarette. Perhaps my father'll be back sooner than I expect. He'd hate to miss you. Is it whiskey you like, or would you rather have a glass of port?"

Ingpen allowed himself to be persuaded. His heart went out to this charming, friendly girl who thought he played the pianola so remarkably well. He sat down and chose port. But that evening Ingpen didn't make Mr. Jennison's acquaintance. At half-past ten, when at last he tore himself away, his host was still abroad. Miss Jennison, however, didn't seem to require her father's consent in binding him to an appointment for the following night, and when Ingpen at last went away, vastly well satisfied with himself and with two glasses of port inside him, he was committed to the reception of his neighbours.

Resolved to do these admirers of his music well, he laid in, next evening, on his way home from the City, a bottle of port, a bottle of whiskey, a siphon, a box of rather better cigarettes than those he commonly smoked, and a pound of sweet biscuits.

Previously, during his lunch hour, he had bought at an emporium in Cheapside a large green Oriental curtain, because the thought of his very white bed had stabbed him during his journey to the office. He returned home, considerably burdened, dined hastily, and then with Mrs. Eccles's benevolent help set his house in order for company.

The washstand, for example, was pushed into the embrasure of the window and the curtains were drawn across it. The bed was transformed into a divan. The table was set out with wine-glasses and tumblers, the box of cigarettes and a plate of biscuits. The bottles and siphon having been ranged along the chimneypiece, nothing more was to be done.

Stay! a second easy chair was wanted. Mrs. Eccles ceded one of those that stood in her kitchen.

She retired. Ingpen sat down, lit a cigarette from the box, and affected to absorb himself in a novel which he had found a year previously on a seat in Kensington Gardens and since had read twice.

Promptly at half-past seven the guests arrived.

Mr. Jennison was a man well on in years, grey-bearded, partly bald, spectacled and enormous. He was polite to Ingpen but not effusive. He accepted the cigarette and the whiskey-and-soda which Ingpen offered him, sat down in the larger of the two arm-chairs and became silent.

His child—Rose was her name—made up for his taciturnity. She was affability

itself, exclaimed delightedly at the hospitable preparations which had been made, demanded port and a biscuit and a cigarette, and urged Ingpen to lose no time in getting to work with the piano.

Ingpen asked for nothing better. He sat down at once and thundered out "Ma Blue-eyed Nigger Mammy," his masterpiece. Rose applauded rapturously. So did her father. "Again: Oh, please, please, again!" Ingpen obliged. He simply loved these people.

Then, remembering his manners, he proposed that Miss Jennison should essay the machine. Rose, protesting that she would never, never be able to manage it, allowed herself to be installed upon the seat.

While she worked the pedals and tried to remember what Ingpen had told her about the stops, Ingpen stood by, very important, producing instruction and encouragement. When it was over he told her that she had done splendidly and insisted on her trying again. She was easily persuaded, and yet another foxtrot clattered out upon the affrighted air.

"And now," she said, "it's father's turn. Father, come along. You've simply no idea how wonderful it is to be making music like this. You'll absolutely revel in it. What shall we give him to play, Mr. Ingpen?"

"This," said Ingpen, holding up a roll.
"It's a bit rocky in places, I'm afraid, but it's a corking tune. It's called 'Cutey."

"By Jove!" said Mr. Jennison, when he had bunglingly executed "Cutey," "but this is absolutely glorious! I must do another, my dear fellow. I positively must. This machine's a blooming revelation. I don't wonder it fascinates you."

When he had played "Why did you look at my Eyes?" Rose begged to be allowed to try again, and no sooner had she finished her turn than Mr. Jennison was laying further claim to the piano. Particularly he wanted to play that stunning piece with which Mr. Ingpen had opened the proceedings. For the third time that evening "Ma Blue-eyed Nigger Mammy" was torn out of the bowels of the piano.

Ingpen began to think that it was time for him to be performing again. Glad though he was that his guests should be enjoying their own production of music, he couldn't help feeling that it would be nice of them, once in a way, to offer him a seat on the stool, and resume their proper rôle of audience. After all, they had come to

listen to him playing. That had quite distinctly been the understanding. If he had asked Miss Jennison to try the pianola, he had done so, he knew, much more in order that she might appreciate the better the difficulties which he had learnt to surmount, than that she might herself learn to surmount them. If she alone had gone on playing, it mightn't have been so bad; but when her old father also rooted himself on the stool, well, it was a bit thick. exactly, did he, Ingpen, come in? began to look sulky as he tried to devise some means of again securing the position of executant.

But the moment Mr. Jennison had finished re-rolling "Ma Blue-eyed Nigger Mammy" Rose was ready with a piece she hadn't yet tried and he was hardly on his legs before she was down in front of the piano and fitting her roll into its slots.

To be brief, Ingpen never got another chance all evening to display himself. Jennisons left him at ten o'clock and he was then too utterly cast down to continue making music for his own sole benefit. Moreover, old Jennison had got away with a good half of the whiskey. A most expensive and unsatisfactory party. Not in a hurry would he again invite these neighbours of his to be the admirers of his virtuosity.

And so to bed, very sick.

III.

By the next evening Ingpen had a good deal recovered and it was with a keen musical appetite that he sat down to his piano as soon as Mrs. Eccles had cleared his dinnertable. His mind was free of all apprehension lest he should be annoying his neighbours and he looked forward with unalloyed satisfaction to his evening's feast of harmony.

He played the roll of "Ma Blue-eved Nigger Mammy " through twice and was just about to begin it again when his door opened and Mrs. Eccles announced Mr. and Miss Jennison.

Fortunately the bed was again disguised, for Mrs. Eccles had strongly approved the effect of the djidjem and had adopted it as a regular feature of her lodger's chamber; but the washstand was no longer curtained. Ingpen, agonisingly aware of this circumstance, rose to greet his visitors.

They appeared, all smiles and eagerness. "Here we are," Miss Jennison announced from the doorway, "we simply had to come in when we heard the piano going. You've no idea how much better it sounds on this side of the wall, and I can't tell you how nice of you it is to let us come and listen to you properly. But don't let us be any trouble. Just go on exactly as if we weren't here. Take the easy chair, father, and I'll sit here at the table." Thus she underlined the return of the second easy chair to its home in Mrs. Eccles's kitchen.

If Ingpen had been a man of real character he would, of course, have taken the girl at her word by resuming the piano stool and staying on it, with his back firmly. presented to the Jennisons, till closing time. The unfortunate fellow happened, however, to be one of those weak-minded creatures who can't bear to be rude to people, so long as people are amiable to them.

And since nothing could exceed the amiability of these Jennisons or be more flattering than their wish to abolish the wall which prevented them from enjoying his music to the full, Ingpen made himself as polite as ever he could by producing cigarettes, biscuits, whiskey, port and the nearly empty siphon and urging his visitors to help themselves.

Then he played "Ma Blue-eyed Nigger Mammy" to them, and then, at Rose's particular request, "Cutey."

"You play absolutely marvellously," she "I simply don't see how you do itdo you, father?"

No," said old Jennison.

"Oh!" said Ingpen modestly, "anyone can do it with a little practice." Then, to break the pause which here occurred, "Won't you have a go now, Miss Jennison?" he inquired.

She bounded to her feet. "Oh, may I really?" she cried. "You are good. If I

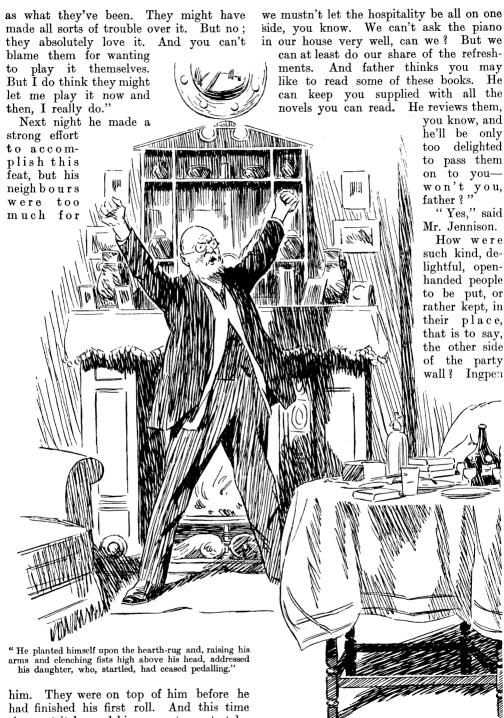
might—just one—

That evening Ingpen returned but once to the piano-stool. Old Jennison played, in all, for forty-five minutes, and Rose for thirty-seven.

They left him with tears of gratitude standing in their eyes. Ingpen finished the whiskey.

On the following evening he went to the Notting Hill Palais de Danse, and the Jennisons had to get on without listening to one another playing his pianola.

"The trouble is," he reflected as he walked home, "that it's no use telling Mrs. Eccles to tell them I'm not in, because the piano gives it away that I am. I can't hand them a slap in the jaw like that, not people who are so nice about the piano



him. They were on top of him before he had finished his first roll. And this time they put it beyond his power to protest by bringing whiskey and port of their own, yes, and cigars and half a dozen novels for Ingpen.

"For," Rose explained, "if we're to come in to listen to your playing often,

couldn't do it. He threw up his hands and the Jennisons once again had their implacable will of the piano.

And so to bed, gnashing the teeth.

IV.

"What it's coming to," said Ingpen next morning to his lathered reflection, "is this. I shall have to get rid of the piano. That's what I shall have to do. There's nothing else for it. A piano's all very nice and splendid so long as one can play it oneself, but when one has to sit all night listening to other people play-

ing it, it's rather another thing. I'll give it one more evening, and if those infernal Jennisons come in and turn me off my own stool again, I'll put the blessed piano back in Chandler's hands

oneself. Yes, I think it'll be the Palais for mine, evenings, again, very soon."

True to his purpose on the following evening, he sat down to his piano after dinner, hating it, but determined, in justice to his own pocket, to give it yet another chance to recapture his affections. When the Jennisons came in (to-night with a bottle

of Benedictine) he was almost pleased, since their arrival practically assured him that he and his piano were going to part.

To-night he made no attempt to secure an audience. "Oh no," he said, when Rose begged him to give them "Ma Blue-eyed Nigger Mam-

my," "I'd much rather hear you play it, please. You play it far better than I do. In fact, I can't tell you how much I enjoy your playing. I think it's frightfully good of you and your father to come in

So sell for what

it'll fetch. I'll drop most of my money, blast it! But I'd rather do that than

go on in the awful way we're doing. And when all's said and done, dancing's much better fun than playing the piano, even to here night after night and play to me as you do." Then, rather pleased with his attempt at sarcasm, he slipped the roll of "Ma Blue-eyed Nigger Mammy" into place and with a wave of the hand indicated the stool.

"Oh!" said Rose, "you don't mean

that, Mr. Ingpen. You're only being polite. Of course, I don't play half as well as you, and I never shall. But naturally father and I are only too grateful to you for letting us come in and play a few rolls, and if it really gives you any pleasure at all, why, so much the better."

She set the pedals going and the room was flooded with sound.

Ingpen sat down and glowered at the curtains, behind which the washstand now always spent its evenings. "Yes," he thought, "to-morrow Chandler calls for that piano and takes it away where Miss Blooming Jennison may go and play it if she can."

At the same moment Mr. Jennison sprang out of the arm-chair with a scream. Then he planted himself upon the hearth-rug and, raising his arms and clenching fists high above his head, addressed his daughter, who,

startled, had ceased pedalling.

"I can," he hissed passionately, "stand this horrible farce no longer. Come what may, I'm done with it. Your scheme, Rose, sounded plausible enough next door, and even appeared to promise us a sort of amusement; but I'm not man enough to carry it out. I simply can't bear these noises at such close quarters any longer. I will buy some ear-plugs or take to spending my evenings in a public-house or move into another street, but not another minute will I persist in your silly plan of driving him to get rid of his piano by affecting pleasure in it and establishing ourselves as enthusiastic and constant performers on it.

"Another three evenings of this"—he swung his arms in circles-" and I should be a madman, a criminal lunatic with the blood of this wretched young fool "-he indicated his host—"upon my hands. Come then, Rose; away, my poor mistaken Your plan has miscarried. We have done what you dreaded. We have got the fellow's back up, and from now on he will undoubtedly play his cursed piano less for his own pleasure than to spite us. We have done our little best, but I am an old man. My nerves are not my servants. I ought to have kept out of this; but of course I couldn't. A chaperon you had to have. But come!" He ran down.

"Oh, you silly old goat," said Rose.
"Now you've completely torn it. You've
made an enemy of him all right now, and
if he plays you into an apoplectic stroke
every night for the rest of your life, you've
only yourself to blame."

Then, turning to Ingpen, who sat with his mouth wide open and his eyes protruding, she went on: "I see you don't quite understand, Mr. Ingpen, so perhaps it would be more civil if I explain. The fact is that when you first began playing your pianola in here, my father wanted to come and break you and it up with a coal-hammer, and then, when I wouldn't let him do that, he was all for writing you or your landlady a violent letter. But I thought I knew a better way than to start a neighbourly feud, which would have had no result except to make you play twice as long and four times as loudly, just to show us what you thought of us.

"So I persuaded my father to pretend that we adored your dreadful music and thus edge our way into your affections and confidence, and get invited in here to listen to you, and then get you to let us try, and then jolly well come in every night and never give you a show with your own piano. You see I calculated that we could so sicken you of ourselves and our playing that you would get rid of your pianola simply to get rid of We were going to call on you but you came in first. And of course it was part of my scheme that we should be as sweet as honey to you and bring in drinks and cigars and books for you, load you, in fact, with attentions, so that you wouldn't have the face to shut your door against us. And I believe it would have worked if my poor old father could have stuck it, but, as you see, he couldn't and he's broken out and queered the whole show, and now there's a full-sized neighbourly feud between him and you, and you will proceed, I imagine, to take it out of him by playing your instrument all night and every night until he either goes crazy or changes his abode. And now, we'll retreat in as good order as we can. Come, father!"

Ingpen had risen to receive this address. He now crossed the room and opened the door. He was excessively pink in the cheeks and rather white round the mouth. He was also breathing heavily through his

"It's a pity," he said, "that you gave yourself such a lot of trouble. If you'd told me I was disturbing your father I'd have been quite willing to play only when he was out or perhaps only a half-hour each evening. I couldn't possibly enjoy playing if I felt I was worrying somebody. I'd rather not play at all. And so you needn't be afraid that I'm going to take it out of

your father, for what you and he have done to me. To-morrow the piano goes away to be sold by Chandler of the High Street for what it'll fetch, and meanwhile I'll wish you and your father a very good evening, Miss Jennison."

He opened the door to its fullest extent. "Rose," shouted Mr. Jennison, as he pointed dramatically to Ingpen, "permit me to indicate to you a particularly fine gentleman. He makes us look like mud. I hope you're as properly ashamed of yourself as I am, my girl. I trust that Mr. Ingpen will forgive us and forget that we ever tried to be so extremely clever in our dealings with him. I don't dare to ask you to let me shake your hand, Mr. Ingpen, but if you would wipe your boots on my trouser-

legs I shall be infinitely obliged."

Ingpen laughed nervously. "Oh," he said, "that's perfectly quite all right, Mr. Jennison. I shan't bear no 'ard feelings against you and Miss Jennison. I shan't really. But, if you don't very much mind, I'd be glad if you wouldn't stay here any longer, because I think I'm going to cry, and I'd rather be alone for that."

"Girl," roared Mr. Jennison, "out-

side!"

The door closed upon them.

And now there only remains to be asked the question: "Who became the anonymous purchaser at the price of £50 of Ingpen's player-piano?"



TIME.

IME checks the current of the passionate blood, Time turns ripe wisdom into senile mirth; Time drowns the stoutest ships beneath the flood, Time brings the noblest beauty to the earth.

Time puffs the bloom, and Time throws down the fruit, Time lays the flowers on the withered grass; Time plucks the strings, they tremble and are mute; Time sees the world and all its wonders pass.

Man comes with his indomitable heart, Snatches a flower and hums a gallant stave, Finds joy in love or lonely peace apart Before old Time can get him to the grave.

Time wins so soon in this unequal race-Are we not strong who hold him for a space? OSCAR LLOYD.



"'And not a soul guesses?' asked the woman. 'Not a soul,' said he. I'll meet you in the old barn,' the woman's voice went on. 'Oh, won't they all have something to surprise them!'"

THE BRIDE-CARRYING

By DOROTHY ROGERS

Author of "If To-day be Sweet"

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON

LMTON is a picturesque but quite unimportant village strung along the highway as a handful of beads is strung on a stout thread. Half a mile to the west of it, where a muddy, high-banked lane forms a cross-road, there is a dilapidated sign-post, its arms pointing this way and that along the highway. On these are painted, with the simple directness of the country mind, "To London," "To Bath." The mileage is not given, neither need it be given here; it is too great in either direction to be of much importance.

Motorists hurrying through, sometimes point out to each other the village green and the ducks, sometimes two very bowed and ancient cottages, heavily hung with creepers, next to the "Hobnails" Inn, sometimes the general picturesqueness of the

place. None stay, because the inn is obviously an inn and not an hotel; one's chauffeur would not like it; also the church is not by the wayside and to see it would necessitate several minutes' walk—not worth while disturbing the rugs and cushions.

As a matter of fact, the motorists are right in passing through; there is nothing of special interest in the village, save one curious custom, and that, not being of frequent occurrence, has up to the present attracted no attention. I myself, as a mild landscape painter, armed with easel and camp-stool and a satchel of sketching-blocks and brushes, fell upon the village and my comfortable cottage quarters in a delightfully haphazard way. It required two or three weeks to accustom the natives to my presence so that they took my camp-stool and

easel as a matter of course round any unexpected barn-wall or gateway. It took longer than that to tame them into drawing near for a shy, slow word and a pipeful of tobacco. It was, in fact, much like enticing wild birds with crumbs, a slow job but well worth the trouble. I found it so, at any rate, for the first man I actually so tamed (and, though it brings me less credit to admit it, he was a comparatively garrulous soul to strangers) told me of the custom. Until then, little had I suspected that in such a quiet, modest country village, easy-going as its great farmhorses, there should survive a custom direct from prehistoric times. They themselves confessed it as dating "a many year back, there's no knowing how long," but I traced it straight to the stone-hatcheted cavedwellers, and I think there can be no doubt.

Albert Jennings, my first-tamed native, was a bent old fellow in earth-coloured corduroys tied in below the knee. His brick-red face and neck were criss-crossed with wrinkles and fringed with a straggling growth of grey hair that continued right round his chin and jaws and up under the line of his battered old hat. He had a high-pitched voice and a still higher whinnying chuckle that displayed a row of jagged brown teeth. He was never seen without something—a quid of tobacco, the stem of an evil pipe, or even a blade of grass—to mumble and chew in his mouth. This, then, was my informant as to the surviving ceremony of the cave-dwellers, and thus was the manner of his information.

A week or more after our first tentative parley and my offering of tobacco, he sidled towards me round a corner where I was busy sketching the mellow roof-lines of some cottages, and after a preliminary "'Marnin'!' leant up against a wall and meditatively chewed a blade of grass.

Knowing the shyness of these people, I continued painting with no further comment than one upon the weather, to which he responded by casting an eye skyward with a non-committal nod. Presently, however, he shifted from one leg to the other, at the same time emitting a whinnying chuckle.

I glanced up questioningly, but went on working.

After a moment he chuckled again and spoke.

"I do be thinking of Ben Tugwood's darter," he remarked by way of explanation.

Still I said nothing, merely encouraging him by another interrogatory glance.

"She do be in a tearing rage," he volunteered next.

"What about?" I asked; an unwise question since it seemed to dam some slow and obstinate stream of thought, causing it to flow immediately into other channels.

"You bin here some time now, hain't

ye ? "

I nodded.

"Ha' ye ever seen one o' our weddin's ?"

I shook my head.

"Well, you may have a sight o' one come Saturday, all bein' as it do come off!" Again he chuckled, this time with more energy.

"Ben Tugwood's daughter?" I inquired, more by way of politeness than interest.

"Aye. Her banns 'a bin called with Willy Maidment, an' the weddin's for next Saturday—if it do come off!"

Once more hilarity possessed him, almost to the dropping of the well-chewed grass stem

"Why shouldn't it come off?"

"D'ye know Anne Tugwood?" I shook my head. "Well, any'ow, I reckon you've seed her father. Old Ben Tugwood, 'e's bin on Farmer Weston's land, man and boy, these fifty year. Lives in one o' them old 'ouses on the green, next to the ''Obnails.' Aye, you've got 'im; that's the man."

I had not, but I had his cottage on more than one page of my sketch-book, and so I nodded, well knowing that until the identity of the characters was fixed the tale would

not proceed.

"She's a strappin' fine young woman if there was one!" he went on appreciatively. "Funny 'ow a gurt fine girl like that'll pick up with a little chap like Willy Maidment, one as she could put under her arm, as you might say."

He appeared to ruminate silently, and I, busy with a sunny stain of lichen on the old roof-slope, was silent likewise and absorbed.

"Maybe you've seen Willy Maidment?"

More introduction of characters!

"'E keeps the 'Arfway House' a milenarf along the London Road. A dandy little chap, 'e is; 'e knows what 'e's about! Shouldn't wonder if one o' these days 'e don't keep one o' these 'ere big places, with stablin' an' a garridge and all, like the 'Red Lion' at Dulcaster!"

He paused to impress me with the magnitude of this suggested splendour.

"And he is marrying Anne Tugwood?" I remarked.

Again the whinnying chuckle.

"Aye, if she will."

"It's rather late to cry off if the banns have been published, isn't it? Have they quarrelled?"

"No, they ain't quarrelled. But, ye see, it's like this, she's a superstitious young

surprise and the eagerness of one who longs to tell a tale. "Well, now! An' you bin 'ere so long, too! Not but what we don't 'ave a weddin' hereabouts but just once in a way, like. Well, it's like this. I dunno how it may be in other parts—I've heard tell



"The small dapper man wheeling the swaying, flowery bath-chair."

woman and yet she ain't no mind to be laughed at, an' ther's no gettin' out o' the custom."

"What custom?" I asked, now mildly curious.

"Ain't you heard tell o' the custom?"
He opened wide his eyes, filled with feigned

they don't do it same as we—but after they'm tied and all the jollification is over, the bridegroom do have to *carry* 'is bride home. If she was to go on her own two feet or even so much as a 'oss or a motey-car was to draw 'er, I dunno what mightn't 'appen; an' no young woman o' these parts ain't a-goin' to take no chances!"

Then it was that I had an instant vision of a cave-dweller dragging his bride home by the hair, and, following in his wake, a hot and perspiring village bridegroom staggering off down the lanes, bearing in his arms a solid, giggling bundle of white-clad womanhood, with, maybe, a floating veil to choke and blind him on the way.

Albert Jennings gave vent to another whinnying burst of amusement.

"An' when you come to look at Anne Tugwood walkin' a 'ead and shoulders above little Willy Maidment," he

some reference to dinner and his old woman.

That night I went, as I sometimes did, to chat with the villagers at the "Hobnails" over a mug of beer. Many a bit of local colour I could have got there had I been a writer, and, as it was, many a weather-wrinkled face or whimsical twist of an ex-

pression did I garner into my sketch-book.

My friend Jennings was there, of course,
and Ben Tugwood dropped in later. I recognised him at once as a man I had seen about.



"Along the path that runs diagonally across the green we watched them go."

what's a-goin' to 'appen! That's why I tell 'ee she be in sech a way."

There, apparently, his information ended. He became silent, save for a further occasional chuckle, and at last moved off with and his identity was immediately made known to me by the storm of jovial humour by which he was instantly greeted.

"''.'Ullo, Ben, an' 'ow's the weddin' goin'

on?" asked one.

"I rackon Anne do be fastin' these days to make an easier job of it for Willy," quoth another.

"I 'ave heard tell that Willy Maidment be gettin' into training with the dumb-

bells," came in yet another voice.

Each sally was duly applauded by uproarious laughter in which the bride's father joined as heartily as the rest. He was a red-faced man with grizzling hair and a deep cleft in his chin. When at last he got a chance to speak, it was in a slow, thoughtful drawl.

"I dunno what's come over my gel these last two days. Ye all know the takin' she was in a week agone when she all but threw 'im over an' then cried 'er eyes red because she'd done it. Well, now she don't seem to care a wink of my eye about whatever's said. I heard her tellin' Sally Barnes this marnin' as 'e'd told 'er it 'ud be all right and she wasn't carin'. I will say this for Willy Maidment, 'e's got a way o' saying a thing as though 'e meant it an' it wur all right!"

Ben Tugwood shook his head and pursed his lips to indicate complete mystification. After listening to a good deal more jocular speculation as to how the bridegroom intended to overcome the difficulty, I departed.

As I left the "Hobnails" I had to pass the Tugwoods' cottage, and there in the porch I beheld Anne Tugwood and her lover. There was no doubt about it, she towered above the little man who stood beside her. She was weeping into her apron as I passed, and I heard her say between her sobs:

"Oh, Willy, if you'd only tell me what you're goin' to do! I daren't begin unlucky and walk home, but you won't make a figure of fun of me before all the other folk?"

"You trust me, Anne, my girl. You won't walk home, nor yet be made a figure of fun, don't you be afraid."

It was as his father-in-law had said, Willy Maidment certainly was convincing. Anne Tugwood uncovered one eye and, still dabbing at the other with her apron, appeared to be reassured. Neither of them noticed me as I strolled by and went on my way, filled with curiosity and quite determined to witness the ceremony of the bride-carrying.

The next night, strolling along the lane that runs beside the Cottage Hospital, to smoke a final pipe and get a last breath of the sweet evening air before I turned in, I came upon the bridegroom once again. He was standing in the deep shadow of the high hedge, talking in low tones to a woman. She had something wrapped about her head

and figure, and her face barely glimmered in the darkness, but just as I recognised him by his stature and his voice, so by hers did I recognise that she was not Anne Tugwood. What they said I could not hear, but they were very close together and drew closer still as I approached, obviously with the idea of concealment. Both were silent as I passed, but afterwards my quickened ears caught a few words.

"And not a soul guesses?" asked the

woman.

"Not a soul," said he.

"I'll meet you in the old barn," the woman's voice went on. "Oh, won't they all have something to surprise them! I wonder what Anne Tugwood'll say!"

There was a little gurgle of laughter, and when I glanced back over my shoulder he

appeared to be holding her hands.

I walked on, feeling very uneasy and even angry. This wedding had begun to interest me; moreover, I had seen Anne Tugwood only that morning, a fine, upstanding young woman, fair-haired and largely moulded, and had liked the honest frankness of her wide brown eyes. She must have courage, It is no easy thing to face the gibing of all one's little world, even, I should imagine, for the sake of one's beloved. She had, too, only his word for it that she would not face an inauspicious home-going as well, since it was manifestly impossible that so small a man could carry her, and, according to the ruling of deep-rooted superstition, no other than his arms might take her home. It was plain she trusted him, yet here I had discovered him, almost on his wedding eve, making secret plans with another woman, hidden in the darkness of an unfrequented

When I went by the place again, a few minutes later, both Maidment and the

woman were gone.

So much had this simple village romance taken hold upon me that I felt as deep an anxiety for the happy accomplishment of the wedding as though it were that of personal friends. I was even curious to the point of strolling out, the following night, which was the wedding eve, to the "Halfway House" to inspect the prospective bridegroom more closely over the rim of a blue cider-mug. He was a dapper little dark fellow, quiet and self-contained, smiling good-humouredly at much friendly village wit of the kind that had sparkled at the "Hobnails" a night or so before, but saying little. A man who would keep his own

counsel, I reflected, and, as Albert Jennings had foretold, a man who intended to get on. He gave me the impression that the "Halfway House" was prophetically named as but a temporary halting-place along the

upward path of his ambition.

But, remembering the secret meeting I had witnessed, I was biased to a strong mistrust of his quiet manner, which was dissipated only on the following afternoon when, at half-past two o' the clock, he emerged from the cool, musty-smelling church, a neat small bridegroom beside the large and buxom, white-frocked figure of Anne Maidment. He had the air of a man who, having weighed the worth and fitness of every move in life, walked confident of success in every undertaking. As for Anne, her face looked, if a trifle defiant of ridicule, at least as quietly confident as his, and after watching them both head the shambling procession of invited guests along the lane and over the green to Ben Tugwood's cottage, my last suspicion vanished and I was left with merely a double curiosity as to the meaning of that secret meeting and his solution of the problem of Anne's home-carrying. Therefore, in the evening, I planted my easel in a convenient spot near to the cottage and began some desultory sketching while I awaited developments.

Bursts of merriment and loud voices floated through the open door and window, also occasional outbreaks of somewhat wavering song, followed by much rapping on a table and stamping of feet in generous applause. At last, when I was beginning to tire of waiting, and the rooks were sailing home, cawing sleepily high above the green, there was a more uproarious burst of laughand immediately the bridegroom So quickly did he come and so emerged. stealthily did he dart along the cottage wall and up an alley that when two or three flushed and laughing fellows broke after him through the doorway he was out of sight. They stood waiting, therefore, hanging about the door, calling rough witticisms to those within, to which women's voices retaliated briskly.

My view included a few yards up the alley along which Maidment had gone, and on this I fixed my attention. Presently, coming along it I beheld a singular procession. First a young woman in uniform (I recognised her as one of the nurses from the Cottage Hospital), pulling the long guiding handle of a bath-chair; next, the bath-chair itself appeared in sight, but such a

glorified chariot as I had never seen before, tied with great bows of white ribbon, every spoke of its wheels outlined with white oxeye daisies, and all round the body and back a deep mass of daisies, wild parsley, elderblossom, guelder-roses, campion—all the white wild blossoms that could be got together to form a perfect bower of loveliness that rose like a hood above the seat. Behind the bath-chair, his hands on an extravagantly beribboned handle, walked Willy Maidment, quiet and assured as ever, but with a slight sparkle of excitement or of triumph in his eyes.

Before they drew into the street the nurse

came to a halt.

"Wait a minute," she said; "let us give it a last look over to see it's all right."

The voice was that of the woman in the lane!

As they appeared in sight of the loiterers about the cottage-door, a shout went up of astonishment, laughter and admiration. The bride came forth at once, her cheeks flushed, her expression apprehensive, and for a moment, as she beheld the beflowered and beribboned chair, I knew it was touch and go for Willy Maidment; so, I fancy, did the group of watchers, among whom there was a sudden little hush of waiting; and so did Willy Maidment. He let go the backhandle of the chair and, stepping forward, took his wife by the hand.

"Get in, Anne," he said to the defiant, hesitating bride, "it's the first time, maybe, that you've drove in a carriage that isn't pulled by a horse, but it mayn't be the last,

my girl!"

The hush of waiting was broken by a murmur of approbation as his words brought prophetically to the rustic mind the pros-

perous vision of a "motey-car."

Anne looked at him, bewildered, then her defiance changed to infinite satisfaction and a touching pride. With a little, becoming air of dignity, amid the appreciative roars of applause of the wedding-guests, she stepped into her blossomy throne, took the handle from the beaming, chattering nurse, and, to the sound of three rousing cheers, Willy Maidment pushed off.

Along the path that runs diagonally across the green we watched them go, the small dapper man wheeling the swaying, flowery bath-chair, from which a ribbon and the edge of a white skirt floated, past the startled ducks and on until, between the shoeing-forge and the post-office, he and his bridal burden disappeared down the lane

that wanders, conveniently parallel with the dusty highway, towards the "Halfway House."

Thus it was that a modern, modest maiden, under the impression that she was dodging

a superstitious omen of ill-luck, conformed to the savage custom of her age-old caveancestry. And thus it was that no arms save those of her lawful husband took Anne Maidment home.



THE SHADOW.

ALL careless, our brief-touching spheres
Make swift for us our trysting-place,
And leave for us the questless race,
The passage of the years.

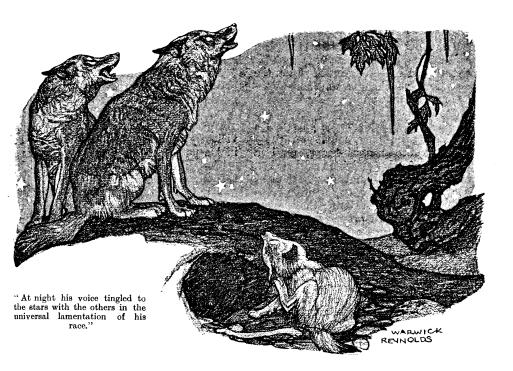
Banners from buried worlds we bear, From empires where no haunting fear Of the dread loss of all that's dear Stirs the inviolate air.

This is the shadow of a dream—
The light and laughter of this day
Are whispers from the void, the stray
Dust of old stars agleam.

And this the sum of all we know, The body's singing and its pain, The fierce, pent surging of the brain, The spirit's shuddering glow:

For you, whose hands and lips are mine, To-morrow will be gone from me; The sleepers of Eternity Will send to me no sign.

L. A. PAVEY.



ISHMAEL

By LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON CASSERLY

Author of "Dwellers in the Jungle," "The Elephant God," "Life in an Indian Outpost," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

HE sun was setting in the red sky behind the dark mass of the Western Ghaut Mountains which look down on the Indian Ocean; and in the mud-walled huts of the village the fires were already lighted to cook the evening meal. Their acrid smoke drifted out through the open doors and made the shaven-headed old men choke and cough where they sat and gossiped under a giant banyan tree in the one street of this Deccan hamlet. In from the level plain outside the last herd of home-returning cows had passed, driven with resounding blows by the bare-legged brown children into the byres fenced with high hedges of dry thorn to keep out prowling panthers or any particularly enterprising tiger with a taste for beef.

As far as the latter was concerned, the precaution was unnecessary that night; for the only one of the striped brutes within an

area of five square miles—the little kingdom from which he kept all rivals—was at the moment busy with the carcase of a young heifer, which had incautiously strayed from its herd and gone alone to drink from a stream in the deep nullah where in a clump of bushes the tiger was watching for just such a bit of luck.

Around the village ran an ancient rampart of mud-bricks, a relic of the days when marauding bands of Pindaris, sweeping like a cloud of locusts over the Plains of India, plundered and slew all honest folk who could not keep them on the right side of such walls. But now in this, as in others, the gates stood open day and night; for the Peace of Britain was on the land, and Mahratta banditti and others were held in check by prosaic policemen and no longer needed armies to cope with them.

Yet every night beyond the wall of this

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hamlet gathered gangs of thieves that had no fear of the havildar (sergeant) and his yellow-turbaned constables in the thana, the police-station, which was the only wellbuilt house in the village. Through the breaches in the crumbling rampart passed in the dark hours shadowy forms which slunk around the huts, intent on petty larceny from the rubbish-heaps, until a sudden burst of yelps and frenzied barking, followed by a rush of indignant pariah dogs, sent the robbers scuttling out again into the fields beyond the wall. While the mangy, masterless curs retired growling to nose in their turn the heaps of garbage which they regarded as their own property, the discomfited thieves sat on their tails in a circle, and loudly complained to the star-studded sky overhead.

Dogs themselves they looked at first sight—long-bodied, bushy-tailed, prick-eared animals, with grey, hairy coats and sharp muzzles. They might have passed for wolves, especially in the night hours, which were their favourite time for appearing.

But they were jackals, the four-footed scavengers of India which help the yellownecked vultures to perform the duties of the non-existing Sanitary Authorities of the villages by eating up the offal and garbage flung out, as elsewhere throughout the East, to poison the air and breed disease. world is sadly lacking in gratitude; and the natives of India give no thanks to these poor brutes for the good work that they perform. Their rivals, the ownerless dogs, miserable flea-harbouring mongrels though they be, are allowed to infest the village streets, sleep in the sun in the middle of the roadway and stop the traffic, and have first pick at the rubbish-heaps. But should a jackal venture to show himself in daylight near human dwellings, stones and insults are hurled at him, and the mangy pariahs are encouraged to chase him away.

The enmity on the part of the dogs is pure jealousy; for the jackals are far handsomer, and the curs, ugly with the concentrated ugliness of a hundred mixed

breeds, know and resent it.

But at times the despised race has its revenge; and men and dogs are forced to flee in terror before a representative of it. In scorching months of the Hot Weather—when everywhere, except on the mountaintops, India is one vast torture-chamber, and the nights with their breathless, stifling heat are almost worse than the dreadful day; when the sun, blazing in a brassy sky, burns

up the earth—a terrible madness suddenly seizes some unfortunate jackal. His companions bolt in panic as, with the poisonous foam dripping from his slavering jaws, he pursues them. But generally his first impulse seems to be to rush to the nearest village and run blindly through it, snapping viciously at every beast and human being in his path.

The elders among the pariah dogs know the danger well and flee from him, tails tightly tucked between their legs. But the inexperienced younger mongrels, furious at his unusual audacity, close with him in the courage of ignorance; and his envenomed fangs rend their flesh and doom them to But the an awful death from rabies. evil does not end with them; for, as the same madness seizes them, they spread the dreaded disease among the other animals and the men, women and children of the The babies, brown-eyed, naked little toddlers, who try to make playmates of the pariahs, are the first victims.

So even the mild-mannered Hindus, whose cruel kindness will allow no animal to be killed and leaves old and diseased beasts to linger on to a slow and painful death, who welcome the chance intrusion of a deadly but sacred cobra into their houses, do not encourage the jackals that haunt the neighbourhood of their villages. Rather will they aid the dogs to drive them out.

The injustice rankles, and the four-footed Ishmaels seem to feel it. No wonder, then, that on this night a pack of them, having just been repulsed from the hamlet, sat in a ring in a field beyond the wall, and expressed their indignation in the eerie, blood-curdling howls of their race that seem like the wailing of lost souls. And the sounds are like human language. Had any Briton been listening to these jackals outside the village, he would have sworn that they were uttering English words.

One brass-throated soloist—he was a baritone—sat facing the group, and lifted up his voice.

" I smell a dead Hindu!" he seemed to

yell.

A chorus of tenors queried:

"Where? Where?" Where?"
Then the sopranos shrilled the answer in the top tones:

"There! There! There!"

Listen to the wails, followed by three staccato barks, of any jackals making night hideous in India, in the Sahara, even in any Zoological Gardens—and say if these words are not very like the burden of their oft-repeated song!

From a burrow in the earthen bank around a rice-field, a sharp nose, followed by a slim head with pointed ears and eyes gleaming with green fire, was poked out cautiously. Then, after an inquiring sniff or two, a jackal cub crawled out of the hole, dropped into the field, and sat down to scratch meditatively. He was making a late appearance; for all the others of his tribe had come out of their earthen dwellings long before. But he had purposely remained in hiding until darkness had fallen; for he feared to show himself in daylight, after an unpleasant experience on the previous day.

He was very young and inexperienced; and, tiring of the dullness of his burrow, he had gone in the light-hearted carelessness of youth for a scamper in the fields before the setting sun had sent the tillers of the soil back to their homes in the village.

A group of boys caught sight of him. "Kola! Kola!" (Jackal!) they shouted.

A clod of earth hurled by a vigorous arm struck the unsuspecting cub in the ribs and bowled him over. As he picked himself up a heavy stick, bound with brass wire, just missed his head by inches; and when with streaming tail he bolted, panic-stricken, the clods rattled about him, a few striking him and quickening his terrified flight. Like a streak of lightning the luckless Kola shot up and over the bank of his own field and dived headlong into his burrow, into the farthest depths of which he crept, to crouch panting and trembling, his small heart pounding against his ribs. And as he lay he wondered why the world was such a cruel place for poor little orphan jackals who had never done anyone harm.

For the scared, wee wretch shivering in his narrow hole was an orphan indeed. had never known his father; and his mother, when he was barely weaned, had met her death in a back alley of the village, with the teeth of the biggest pariah bully in her throat and a crowd of mean mongrels fastened on to her defenceless body wherever they could get a grip. And the young Kola was left to fight his own battles and face the world alone. Deprived of maternal Protection and counsels, he had had a hard time of it—bullied by everyone, and falling into errors that other luckier cubs were taught to avoid. They would have known better than to go out into the fields in daylight, when men were about. Had one

of them been bullied the sharp teeth of an angry mother would have defended it.

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The pangs of hunger now drove Kola from his burrow; but the friendly darkness and the loud choruses of the elders of the pack reassured him. As he sat and scratched, the music of their voices stirred him; and, throwing back his little head, he yelped the song too. His shrill treble augmented the concerted howling that floated on the night wind into the sleeping village and aroused the masterless mongrels to answer with angry barking. The noise emboldened him; and, his fright forgotten, he went to search for his supper in the midden-heaps outside the old rampart.

The Hot Weather passed, the dreary months of the rainy season followed, and the cub grew rapidly. He had changed his residence; for a cobra, flooded out of her hole in the ground, took up her abode in his burrow, and Kola had learned enough not to dispute possession with so deadly a snake. With the philosophy of the wild, he accepted the situation and found another hole for himself.

The drenching rain had no terrors for him. It could not penetrate his hairy coat, which steamed as in the heaviest downpour he trotted into the village, bold in the knowledge that the pampered pariahs were sheltering under parked bullock-carts or on the lee side of walls from the pitiless tropical storms in which the unluckier jackals had to be out and about in search of a meal.

The food that the middens and the rubbishheaps provided would hardly seem to be nutritious or sufficient for the numbers of the dogs and their rivals that fed on it; but Kola thrived and grew with the passing months.

Occasionally a bit of better luck fell to the lot of himself and his fellows. Some skinny cow died of extreme old age, a goat was bitten by a poisonous snake on which it trod by accident when reaching up to crop the leaves of a tree growing in an aloe hedge, or a miserable donkey broke its leg and was left to expire in lingering agony by Hindus whose beliefs forbade them to take life. village flayer, his exceedingly low caste permitting him to touch such unclean things, removed the skins, to be made into leather; but the carcases were left as welcome feasts for the scavenger tribes of the air and the Scarcely had the dogs and the jackals snatched one hasty mouthful when, with the whir of rushing wings, the vultures swept down from the sky, hopped or waddled awkwardly to the carrion, pecked savagely at their fellow-guests, and with squeals and squawks drove their curved beaks into the putrefying flesh. Underfoot long lines of big ants trailed up to carry off the crumbs.

In spite of the uncertainty of his food supply—the average was usually ten days of starvation to one of plenty-Kola managed to flourish, and was a well-grown young animal by the time that the Hot Weather came round again. He was not only admitted to full membership of the tribal choral society, but was even promoted to a solo part; and no other performer in the pack could excel the agonising horror of his quavering howl. The independence of his early life had given him an audacity that made him a leader among the younger set; and, despising convention, he ignored midden and garbage heap, and set his youthful followers the bold example of snatching up in the dusk the tiny piglets rooting in the dust beside some heavy-paunched sow dozing in a lane, or carrying off a loudly protesting hen under the noses of the pariahs. He had gained great honour in the clan by defeating in fair fight a big dog which had attacked him singly, unwisely despising him too much to wait for the help of a dozen other mongrels, as is the usual cowardly way of its kind.

He even carried the war into the enemy's country with a vengeance; for one moonlit night he snatched up a pink-skinned, mangy puppy before the eyes of its outraged mother and a dozen other dogs. With a swarm of indignant pursuers yelping at his heels he fled with his prize out into the fields beyond the wall, where, at sight of a horde of his companion-Ishmaelites drawn up in battle array to repel this invasion of their territory, the mongrels retired snarlingly and confessed defeat.

This exploit not only confirmed Kola's authority over the younger members of the tribe, but increased his faith in himself. He was growing fast, and by the end of the Rains was bigger than many adults of the pack, and feared none of them. He was a rebel against the leadership of the old and wily beast that was generally acknowledged as the Chief—not, as with wolves, for courage and fighting power, but because of his great cunning. Kola despised the timidity of his counsels and refused to follow them.

He was afraid of men only; and if he stayed in his burrow until dark he was unlikely to meet any of them. No longer content with preying on little pigs and puppies, he flew at higher game. He eyed hungrily the plump kids, fattened on their mother's milk, trotting along with the herds of village goats; and his mouth watered at the thought of a satisfying meal on one of them. In daylight once he sneaked up towards a well-fed specimen toying with the leaves of a high bush. It seemed friendless and alone; so Kola stalked it cautiously, and then dashed forward to seize it. Suddenly he was struck by a thunderbolt, apparently—he was violently knocked back a dozen yards by a vicious and well-aimed butt from the indignant mother, which in his absorption he had not noticed standing behind the bush. The blow almost stunned him; but he managed to get up and bolt before the enraged goat could reach him and get in a second butt.

A few nights later, when nosing a heap of garbage flung out near the gateway of the village, he heard the plaintive bleating of a kid. It sounded like the frightened call of a lost infant; and Kola's first impulse was to rush towards it. But his second, remembering vividly his recent unpleasant adventure, was to stay where he was. However, as the piteous cries continued, he adopted a middle course, and approached the spot with a new-born caution to investigate from a safe distance the meaning of the noise at this hour of the night when all good little goats should be asleep in their thorn-fenced pens.

The shrill laments arose from a pile of broken branches on the ground; and the jackal, circling it cautiously, came to the conclusion that the kid had been caught under a heavy bough which had somehow fallen on and probably injured it. He carefully searched the immediate neighbourhood to make sure that no long-horned, hard-skulled mother-goat was near.

Satisfied, he approached the pile, from which the bleating came louder and more piteous than ever. Through the heaped-up branches there was a tunnelled passage; and Kola, poking his sharp muzzle into it, was assured by his nose of the presence of the kid at the end of it before his eyes showed him the terrified little animal, which, seeing him, cried out more loudly than ever.

He was strongly tempted to rush in and seize it; but there was something strange in its being where it was, and the suspicious jackal drew back undecided.

However, he soon saw that he was not the only one to hear the noise; for grey



" It was directly in his path; he could not avoid it, for it seemed as if the noses of his pursuers were almost touching his tail. He fell, rather than jumped, into the water."

shapes loomed up through the darkness, and it was evident that if he did not profit at once by this stroke of luck, there were others who would. As one of the pack, an old jackal whom he particularly disliked, approached, Kola resolved not to be forestalled, and entered the tunnel. As he crawled up through the thorny branches, the little goat, seeing him, was so paralysed with fear that its cries ceased.

Hearing the loud sniffing of his rival behind him, the young jackal sprang at the trembling kid, and struck his sensitive nose against an iron grating. And at the same moment there was a loud crash behind him; and, turning as rapidly as he could in the confined space, Kola found himself a prisoner. He was caught in a heavy wooden box-trap divided into two compartments, in the inner one of which the bait, the live kid, was securely fenced. The thorny branches had been heaped on and about the box to disguise it and force any beast approaching it to go to the entrance.

Mad with terror, Kola tried to gnaw a way out; but the trap was lined with sheet iron, on which his teeth made no impression. But all night long he fought against his fate; while outside the howls and yelps of his free companions sounded like taunting laughter, mocking him—the cunning, the crafty, the bold one—who had been caught by a trick which should not have deceived a three months' old cub.

And while hunger racked him, the tortures of Tantalus were his; for all the time the kid was but a few inches from his jaws, but as effectively out of reach as if it were a continent away.

The wailing of the jackals died as the stars faded and dawn whitened the sky. When the sun rose Kola, to his terror, heard the voices of men drawing near his prison. There was a cry of triumph, the branches were hastily pulled away; and, as the light flooded the trap through an iron grating and made the captive blink, a brownskinned man, naked but for a loin-cloth and the long strip of cotton twisted turban-wise around his black, oily hair, peered in at him. A boy joined him, and poked a thick stick in at the snarling prisoner, whose sharp teeth seized it and bit deep into the wood.

Then, while the elder sat down and, taking out of the folds of his turban a box of Japanese matches and a cigarette of rough-cut Indian tobacco rolled up in a dry leaf, lit the latter, the lad ran back to the village.

In a short time he returned, carrying a box on his head and accompanied by a man, also a Hindu, clad in a shirt and a white cotton cloth wound round his waist and passed between his legs to form a sort of divided skirt; while on his shaved skull, on which a long scalp-lock was left, was the plaited, many-folded turban of the Mahrattas. The new-comer stooped down to look at the captive, and smiled contentedly.

The open end of the box was placed against the trap, the grating of which was pulled up vertically; and Kola, in the wild hope of escape, rushed into the box, which was promptly closed by a board, and he found himself still a prisoner. Then he was hoisted up on the boy's head and carried into the village, where the box was thrown down on the earthen floor of a hut with a jolt that jarred every bone in the unfortunate jackal's body. Money passed between the Mahratta and the nearly naked man, the few coins that were the price of treachery, the treachery that deprived Kola of his freedom. Before noon the box was put on a springless bullock-cart, which lumbered and bumped heavily over ten miles of a deeply rutted country road to a railway-station.

Two days later the wretched prisoner, mad with thirst, starving, bruised and battered, heard the lid of the box being wrenched off; and when, blinded by the sudden glare, dazed and frightened, he crouched at the back of the case and refused to come out, it was tilted up until he slid out on to the boarded floor of a large, empty room. It was lit by small windows so high up that when Kola, galvanised into action by the sudden hope of escape, tried to jump up to them, he found them hopelessly out of his reach. In a last despairing effort he rushed madly round and round the walls until, utterly exhausted, he backed into a corner and showed his teeth threateningly at the three men who stood in the middle of the room looking at him.

One was a coolie who had carried in the box, another the Mahratta who had brought him from his far-away home in the Deccan. The third was stranger to the captive's eyes than these; for he was a white man, the first that Kola had ever seen.

While the scared and trembling jackal snarled viciously at them in the desperation of fright, a sudden sound outside startled him anew. It was familiar, yet in a way unknown to him. For it was the barking of dogs, but unlike the frenzied noise of the village mongrels which Kola had long

ceased to hear with alarm. This was different, terrifying, holding a menace so dreadful that the jackal was paralysed with fright. For it was the deep baying of English hounds—the Bombay Hunt pack in their kennels.

Fate and a railway van had brought him hundreds of miles to furnish sport for them and the European riders who twice a week in the winter months came out from the great city on the shores of the Indian Ocean to follow these hounds over the rough country beyond Santa Cruz.

The Indian fox is poor game; but the jackal can be made to give a good run. Around the villages of this district, as everywhere else in India, jackals swarmed. But the local animals were never hunted; for, knowing every burrow, they would promptly go to ground at the first suspicion of danger, and there would be nothing to chase. So men were sent regularly to other parts of India to buy trapped jackals, which, when released in country strange to them, where they did not know the holes and hiding-places, would race away over the open for their lives and give the Hunt a run.

It had been poor Kola's evil fate to be thus captured to make holiday for men, horses and hounds. He had been brought to the huntsman's bungalow beside the kennels, which are situated a dozen miles out from Bombay, near the lovely coast where the tall toddy-palms rustle in the sea-breeze above the white sand. For some days he would be imprisoned in the big, empty room, where he would have plenty of space to move about and exercise his Water would be provided for him, but little food, so that he would not be too heavy and sluggish to run for his life. taken out and released, he would be given a fair chance and a good start; and if he were able to out-distance the hounds he would be a free jackal once again. All that he had to do was to show his pursuers his heels over the paddy-fields and melon-beds beyond Santa Cruz, and he would save his brush and his skin.

However, he knew nothing of this; and, as he paced his prison with nervous steps, he forgot in his hunger even to think of freedom.

One morning a couple of men entered the room; and, when he shrank into a corner and stood at bay, a sack was adroitly put over him, he was tied up in it, and carried outside. Slung over a coolie's shoulder, he

was borne away to the Meet. Squirming, struggling, snarling, he tried to gnaw his way through the coarse material; but a few sharp raps taught him the wisdom of lying still.

still

After an eternity of discomfort he was dumped down, the mouth of the sack untied, and he was shaken out on to the ground. For a moment, bewildered and not understanding what fresh torture was in store for him, he lay still, then scrambled up and looked about him with staring eyes.

A little distance away were many white men and women on horseback, while two riders in red coats restrained with difficulty and long-lashed whips a surging mob of foxhounds. The country around was flat, cut up by walls and the steep earthen bunds around paddy-fields now dry and hard; for the water in which the rice is planted and grown had been drained off and the crops cut. Here and there the plain was dotted with villages, clumps of trees and patches of jungle; and seaward was the dark line of the palm woods.

But far away against the sky rose up the hills that bound the tableland of the Deccan, where Kola was born. A homing instinct drew his eyes to them; and the instant he realized that he was free, he shot like an arrow from a bow towards the friendly mountains.

The Master, watch in hand, looked after him; while the impatient hunters fought with their restive horses and the Whips held back the eager hounds. Suddenly at a sign the latter were freed and, noses to ground, sought the scent. A wise old dog gave tongue, and the whole pack swept away on the fugitive's track.

Across the soft mud of the tidal stream, over the firmer ground beyond, clearing stone walls and the banks of the paddyfields, the hunters streamed behind them, the gay coats and white sun-helmets of Master and Whips leading the van. In and out of the intricate pattern of the melonbeds, with their twisting trenches and unexpected holes, the horses danced nimbly, changing their feet, hopping, leaping, sidestepping—and sometimes falling heavily and sending their riders sprawling.

Straight as the arrow's flight sped the hunted jackal, flying over the uneven ground, jumping the low obstacles, springing up the high ones like a cat, maintaining his lead, and always heading for the hills.

Into a stretch of tangled jungle that hid the burning sun from him he plunged, and felt tempted not to leave the cool shade, but to hide under a bush or try to find a hole to crawl into. But the loud crashing in the undergrowth as the hounds reached the cover sent him on again into the open. He raced over the fields now empty of crops; past a group of Hindu women with red saris over their shining black hair; past a couple of peasants at work; a hamlet from which the pariah curs came out to yap at him until they caught sight of the hounds, when they fled themselves for shelter among the huts from the dreaded foreign dogs.

Kola's tongue was hanging out now in token of distress, his breath was coming fast, his labouring heart was pumping the blood convulsively through his body. But still he kept on bravely. The damp heat of the coastal district oppressed him; and the sun, which he so seldom saw, blazed fiercely down on him. Men and beasts, the elements, the whole universe, seemed joined in a cruel league against one poor little jackal. But he raced on with the courage of despair.

He was sweating hard now, the foam was dropping from his open mouth. A choking thirst gripped his swollen throat. He passed a blind well—swerving only just in time to avoid it—and scented the tantalising coolness of the water in its depths. He did not hear the splash behind him when the two leading hounds, blind to everything but the sight of their prey not far ahead of them now, fell headlong into it.

The character of the ground changed. Kola was racing over sheet rock heated by the sun's rays and blistering his bruised pads. Here and there were large holes from which the neighbouring villagers had quarried the stone to make hand-querns for their wives to grind the grain to make flour for their chupatis—the thin griddle-cakes that serve them instead of bread.

The pack were closing on him. The fugitive had shot his bolt. His strength was failing, his legs were losing their power to carry him. Worse than all, the racking thirst, the awful heat, were killing him. The hunters were far behind; but the hounds, running silent now, were almost on him. He felt that he could do no more.

Suddenly before him yawned a deep quarry-hole filled with water to the brim. It was directly in his path; he could not avoid it, for it seemed as if the noses of his pursuers were almost touching his tail.

He fell, rather than jumped, into the water. The sudden shock of its coldness braced him, restored his strength; and he swam vigorously towards the other side, lapping with eager tongue as he went. But splash after splash told of his enemies leaping in after him. He was lost.

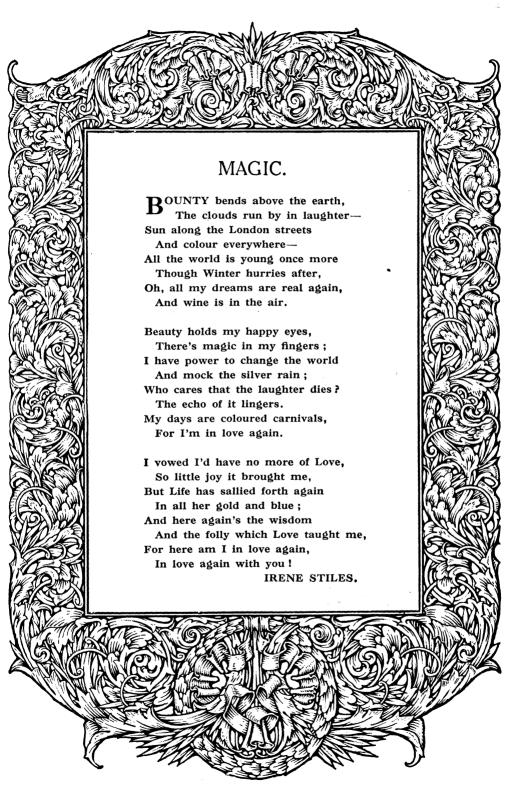
The whole pack had tumbled into the deep pool; and the hounds, crowded together in the narrow space, got in each other's way. The laggards, springing in on the backs of those already swimming, drove them below the surface. The water was filled with a confusion of struggling, splashing, snapping dogs, some of them almost drowning under their companions' bodies. The younger ones began to enjoy the unexpected bath and forgot their mission. Others lost all sense of direction. Some started to fight.

None noticed the draggled little beast, with hair plastered against its lean body, that scrambled out at the far side, and, refreshed by the plunge, raced away with renewed vigour and disappeared in thick vegetation. And by the time the Whips reached the pool and, aided by other hunters, dragged out the hounds, some so exhausted that without help they would have sunk, the chase was over. The pack was fit only to be taken back at a slow pace to the kennels. Their prey had escaped them.

And that night Kola stole into a distant village, near which he had sheltered in a coppice until nightfall, and carried off a baby pig for his hard-earned dinner. The local jackals at once banded against the stranger; and, although he fought and defeated the biggest among them, he was overborne by numbers and driven away into the jungle—an Ishmael even among his fellows.

But he did not lose heart. Daily he battled for his right to plunder the middens of the village, to steal as the others stole. And in the end he won his place among the strange pack; and at night his voice tingled to the stars with the others in the universal lamentation of his race.





THE TEAPOT

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON

THEN Daniel Brant, blacksmith and bachelor, of Nether Stanton. felt that he was nearing his end, he sent for his old friend Jesse Croot, who practised the allied trade of wheelwright.

The message was brought to Jesse—who had just taken off his apron, washed his hands and settled down to tea-by a boy who, in out-of-school hours, delivered passels" for Mr. Bunyard, the grocer.

"Please, Master Croot," he said, "Master Brant says as he'd be 'bliged if you'd look

in this evenin'."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Croot, shaking a sleek grey head. "He's failin', Jesse."

"Stuff an' nonsense," said the wheelwright, but he spoke without conviction.

As the boy was about to depart Mrs. Croot stopped him with a sharp, "Hi, you boy! Where's that half o' tea an' the two o' granerlated that Mr. Bunyard promised faithful to send round by six o'clock?"

"Here they be," said the boy triumphantly, producing the tea and sugar from

a basket.

"I s'pose, if I'd not asked, you'd 'a' gone an' delivered my goods, an' them paid for an' all, to Mrs. Tolmer, or some other body. . . . What do they learn 'ee at school, sonny?"
"Nothin'!" The boy vanished with a

provocative grin.

"A young limb, that," Mrs. Croot said complacently. "A bit like our Jim was at his age." The wheelwright paused in the act of buttering a thick slice of bread.

"Dan'l Brant was allus main fond o' Jim," he said. "When did the lad say

he'd be home?"

"Come Saturday, 'twill be three weeks." Jesse repeated the words in an absentminded way, finished buttering his bread, and consumed it with deliberation.

"'Tis a funny ole world, my gel."

"So 'tis, Jesse, an' no mistake. Now don't you get worritin' 'bout Dan'l, or you'll regret bein' born into it."
"Never that," he said. "A good wife

makes labour light, they say, an' you've bin that to me for risin' thirty year."

"Good gracious, my man, you don't say

so! Pity Dan'l never had a wife."

" Ah!",

After tea Jesse went into his garden. He was proud of his garden: things would grow for him better than for any other small cultivator in Nether Stanton-always with the exception of Daniel Brant. At the local flower and vegetable shows they ran neck and neck: they were rivals, but rivals without jealousy. In the matter of honey, however, Jesse had it all his own way. He possessed that curious instinct for bee-keeping that neither its possessor nor anyone else can understand. Daniel Brant was fond of honey, but "couldn't abide bees." "Maybe," he said, "there's somethin' in a blacksmith's trade they don't like. Anyways, they don't like me. They sting me all to bits."

That evening Jesse contemplated his hives with more than usual affection. It had been a wonderful honey season beans and clover profuse of bloom, and the limes a massed and fragrant richness. And now the many acres of Nether Stanton Common were aglow with the splendour of heather. The bees worked feverishly.

At seven o'clock Jesse changed his coat, took two sections of honey from his store cupboard, and set out to see Daniel Brant. Jesse's house and workshop were at one end of Nether Stanton, Daniel's at the other, and as the wheelwright traversed the length of the village he paused now and then to have a word with a neighbour, or to look about him. A little breeze had sprung up to temper the heat; there was a stir of leaves; doors stood open: all Nether Stanton was, as it were, breathing comfortably. The coolness on the bridge that spanned the stream was delicious, the tinkling sound of the water as soothing as a mother's cradle-song. Jesse was conscious of all this, but dimly: he was thinking about Daniel Brant, wondering how he would find his old friend and if it were possible that he was really failing.

Daniel was waiting for him at his door, leaning on a stick, when Jesse opened the little gate by the forge and advanced up the narrow path to the blacksmith's house.

"Well, Dan'l," he said. "I got your message by that young Vosper lad that carries out Mr. Bunyard's passels. How be 'ee this evenin'?"

"Middlin', middlin', Jesse."

"Has doctor bin?"

"I don't want no doctor meddlin' wi' me. When the call comes nigh I reckon a man knows its meanin'. 'Tis only natur'.'' dresser and placed the two sections of honey on it.

"It'll need to be kep' in the cool," he said.

"Put it in that little cupboard in the corner: that's my larder. It's got a slate bottom an' a ventilator—me own work. An' you'll see an ole teapot there, Jesse. Just bring un out, will 'ee, careful like." The wheelwright obeyed these instructions. He deposited the teapot on the table with the greatest caution.

"That's a funny-lookin' thing," he said.
"I never saw the like of it afore."

"An' ben't likely to again," Daniel said. "That's Wedgwood, that is."



"Jesse followed his host's instructions faithfully and cautiously; the teapot was equal to the test and still looked precisely like a teapot."

"'Tis easy to fancy what ben't true. I'll take uncommon good care that doctor sees 'ee to-morrow. No use to grum'le, Dan'l. I've said the word. . . . I've brought 'ee another lot o' honey. Them bees be at it all day long—no trade-union rate o' wages, an' what they make is took away from 'em. There's times I think there's wickedness in that, Dan'l."

"Doubtless bees were provided for our use an' benefit by the Almighty, Who 'works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.' Have I got it right, Jesse? Tis a grand hymn. . . . Honey's a thing I like more'n most; 'tis clean an' fresh an' strength'nin' to a body."

Jesse carefully took a plate from the

"An' what's that?"

"'Tis a partic'ler kind o' make, very precious."

"So you'd never dare to use un, Dan'l?"
"I've need a

"I've used un just a time or two in forty year." The pair gazed at the teapot. As a practicable teapot it didn't appeal to Jesse, but as something "precious" it was, at any rate, worthy of attention, almost of reverence. It was, in fact, a genuine terra-cotta Wedgwood, decorated with a raised design, in black, of winged and manfaced beasts, the sacred ibis and the ox. The lid was surmounted by a black alligator of singular mildness of expression. It was certainly not the kind of teapot that a

curio-hunter would have expected to come

across in a Nether Stanton cottage.

"I've made me will," said Daniel Brant, "all except that little ole thing. There ben't much to leave, my trade bein' a bit out o' fashion these days, same as yours, Jesse, what wi' motors an' sich-like muck. I've left all to be divided equal between Cousin Martha Wisden an' Cousin Susan Tolmer—away-off cousins, one on me father's side an' one on me mother's, both o' Nether Stanton. I feel that to be right, Jesse, though I've never bin much friends wi' Martha."

"A stuck-up woman, for sure," Jesse said.

"That's the truth. But she's a fine, upstandin' female, an' we mustn't be too hard on female vanities." Jesse sniffed.

"As I was sayin'," Daniel continued, "'tis half to each of 'em—Martha Wisden an' Susan Tolmer—barrin' ten pound for remembrance like to me ole friend Jesse Croot, and twenty pound to me young friend Jim Croot, son of the same, to help un in his business." Jesse grew very red in the face, coughed, and laid a heavy hand over one of his friend's. Daniel's right hand was thin and white: it had not wielded a hammer for three months.

"I need nothin' for remembrance," Jesse said, "but I won't say but what twenty pound wouldn't help Jim along." He added in a husky voice: "But you ben't goin' yet, Dan'l. That doctor chap'll fix 'ee up for another spell o' years." Daniel shook his head and proceeded to state his

problem.

"There's only that teapot left to tackle. 'Twas given to my father as a weddin' present by the ole squire—father was groom to him, you mind—and then 'twasn't new. Squire didn't fancy that teapot, though 'twas worth money, so he said. He was a main careful man, but just to all. So you see, Jesse, the teapot's what's called a heirloom, an' that's a precious thing."

"For sure," the wheelwright said, nodding

gravely.

"What I want your advice 'pon is, shall I will un to Martha Wisden or Susan Tolmer?" Jesse puckered his brows and stared fixedly at the black alligator on the teapot's lid.

"Do both of 'em know 'bout it?" he

asked.

"Both of 'em's seen an' handled it," Daniel said, "an' they think the world o't." Jesse rubbed his chin slowly, bit his forefinger, looked at it as if he was surprised to find it there at all, and then said:

"'Tis a troublous world, what wi' this an' that... If you will the teapot to Martha Wisden she'll use it, in the pride o' her heart, when she has company. An' then it'll get broke. Now Susan Tolmer, havin' no sich stuck-up pride, would put it away safe, same's you've done. A precious thing shouldn't be handled overmuch."

"Those be wise words, Jesse," Daniel said. "I had 'em in my mind, but wanted to hear 'em out of another mouth. Teapot shall go to Susan. Lawyer Dacey shall finish it all to-morrow. I've sent him word to come. . . . Now that's settled, Jesse, let's have a glass together. We'll have a last taste o' rum punch. You'll find a bottle at top o' that cupboard, an' a lemon, an' there's cold tea in the jug on the dresser. You'll find a kettle boilin', or near it, in the kitchen. Sugar—I forgot that: sugar tin's empty. How would a bit o' honey do instead?"

"Well 'nough," said Jesse, a little

perturbed.

"An' make it in the ole teapot, Jesse. Let un have a smell o' good liquor for once."

"Would it taste right out o' a teapot, Dan'l? Doesn't somehow seem right to me."

"Right or wrong, we'll try it that way. It should be the better for bein' brewed in a precious ole thing like that." The blacksmith spoke excitedly—almost like a child who suddenly discovers a new way of playing an old game.

"'Tis puttin' a great responsibility on me," Jesse said. "The teapot's used to hot water, but it mightn't like the rum an' lemon. The strangeness might crack un."

"Stuff an' nonsense!" Daniel smiled, rubbing his hands together feebly. "You get on wi' the job, Jesse. I feel the need o' somethin' warm."

"You surely ben't cold, Dan'l, on a night like this?" the wheelwright asked apprehensively.

"Chilly, that's all."

Jesse followed his host's instructions faithfully and cautiously; the teapot was equal to the test and still looked precisely like a teapot, except that it stood between the two men with its alligator lid off, and the steam that floated above it suggested Jamaica rather than Ceylon. They drank to each other out of heavy tumblers.

"When a man's mind is all settled he can rest." Daniel said.

"You'll sleep well to-night, Dan'l."

"For sure, Jesse."

At nine o'clock the blacksmith's assistant—who had practically taken over the business—came in to see his failing master to bed. Jesse left reluctantly after he had restored the teapot to its place in the cupboard. Enough light remained to endow Nether Stanton with a shadowy loveliness that the cruder revelations of noonday could not give. Now it seemed to have the innocency of childhood combined with the brooding wisdom of a contented old age. And to Jesse, Daniel Brant was so much part of it all—Daniel, who talked of leaving Nether Stanton on a long journey, he who had made so few journeys in his life.

Dacey, the lawyer, arrived on the following morning just as the doctor was leav-

ing Daniel's house.

"Any danger in the case, Dr. Strood?"
"Yes, the old chap's near his end."

"Then I'll make his will on the spot and get him to sign it. It will be a simple matter, no doubt." The doctor nodded.

"He spoke of his will—more interested in that than in me or himself. He's a fine specimen of the real countryman: the type's dying out."

"Never mind. The new type—if there is one—will need men of our profession

just as much as the old."

"More, from what I can see of things," said the doctor, and he clicked the gate

sharply behind him.

It was, as the lawyer had conjectured, a simple matter. Daniel Brant's instructions were precise, and he signed the document with a firm hand. His forge-assistant and a neighbour signed as witnesses, and the lawyer departed with his fee, which, let it be said to his credit, was a very modest one.

When Jesse Croot called that evening he found Daniel full of a benign contentment.

"All's over an' done wi', friend," he said.
"No more shoein' horses, an' sich-like hammerin' work. Not but what I'm sorry to leave the forge, but there——"

Within a week the blacksmith had slipped out of life as easily as a child slips into

sleep.

II.

Mrs. Martha Wisden and Mrs. Susan Tolmer took Daniel Brant's last will and testament in very different ways. Mrs. Wisden had spent five pounds on a black dress and hat for the funeral, but Mrs. Tolmer, who hadn't five pounds to spend, attended the ceremony in indifferent mourning garb, hurriedly made by herself at home. That aroused Mrs. Wisden's scorn, though her elaborate indications of grief did not awaken any jealousy in the subdued and gentle nature of Mrs. Tolmer. Mrs. Wisden considered the equal division of the estate to be absurd: Mrs. Tolmer was infinitely grateful to receive anything at all. Mrs. Wisden resented the legacies to Jesse Croot and his son Jim: Mrs. Tolmer considered them to be right. But it was the matter of the teapot that shook Mrs. Wisden to the soul.

"Why should Dan'l have willed that precious thing to Susan?" she demanded of her husband. "She can't make no use

"An' I s'pose you would, Martha," said Wisden, with a touch of acerbity, "an' then you, or some other clumsy-handed person, 'd smash it to atoms."

"Do you call me clumsy-handed,

Thomas ? ","

"Sometimes you be."

"Well, I never! To call me that after all these years!"

Wisden relented and smiled.

"Come, come," he said, "'twas only meant in joke."

"I don't like such jokes, Thomas."

Wisden was a successful small farmer, and Mrs. Wisden assumed more airs and superiority than are commonly assumed even by the wives of big farmers. She had risen in the world, not without deserving it, and looked down upon those who had remained where they were with contempt. She was not altogether a hard woman, but her kindnesses were edged, so that the recipients felt as much humiliation as gratitude. Susan Tolmer had never risen. Her husband, a good-natured, convivial carpenter, never saved anything, and when he died he left her only the stock and goodwill of his business. These she disposed of -Jesse Croot, who liked the gentle little woman, acting as adviser—for a matter of forty pounds, and set up as a poultry keeper. She managed to make a bare living—no more.

One afternoon, a few days after Daniel Brant's funeral, Susan was washing chickenmeal from her hands in the scullery when she heard a decisive knock at her door.

"Now who can that be?" she said aloud.

She dried her hands, but before she had time to pull down her sleeves the knock was repeated. She hurried to the door, opened it, and beheld Mrs. Wisden, a tall, spare figure, arrayed in the mourning which had recently been the admiration of Nether Stanton.

"Arternoon, Susan," said Mrs. Wisden graciously.

"Arternoon, Martha. Who'd 'a' thought to see you here!"

"Ben't 'ee glad to see me, Susan?"

"For sure, for sure. Come along in an' I'll make a cup o' tea. The kettle's on."

Martha entered the small room majestically and seated herself in the one arm-chair which the late Mr. Tolmer had too frequently occupied. Susan made the preparations quickly and quietly; she never bustled, as Martha often did. She was plump, light-handed and light-footed; hard work and many trials had aged her little and soured her not at all.

"How's things wi' you?" Martha asked.
"Not too good, but, please God, they'll

soon be better."

"Ah!" Martha sighed doubtfully as she watched her hostess filling a brown earthenware teapot. Perhaps there was also a little resentment in the exclamation, for surely such a guest as herself might have been honoured by the production of Daniel's teapot.

"You haven't taken Cousin Dan'l Brant's teapot into use, then, Susan?" she said.

"No, an' I ben't likely to. Dan'l never used un, an' I wouldn't take the risk."

"But he was a single man, an' had no call to use it," Martha said. Susan shook her head.

"Maybe. All the same, 'twas a precious thing to him, an' so 'tis to me."

Mrs. Wisden sniffed.

"What's the good of a teapot you keep hid away?" she asked. "I'd like a sight of it, Susan, if you have it handy."

Mrs. Tolmer rose, opened a door that gave upon a narrow staircase, and ascended. Even her light footsteps could not conceal the fact that the stair-carpet was extremely worn and thin. She returned carrying a square box which contained the Wedgwood teapot, carefully wrapped round with soft paper and embedded in fine sawdust.

"Well I never!" cried Martha. "It might be gold an' jools by the care you take of it." When Susan unswathed the teapot and placed it on the table before Mrs. Wisden, that lady's eyes fastened on it

with fascinated envy. She knew and cared nothing about the artistic merits or demerits of the teapot; she only knew that she wanted it.

"'Tis a shame," she said, "to hide away such a purty bit as that. . . . I'll buy it of 'ee, Susan. 'Twould still be in the family, like."

Susan looked hard at Mrs. Wisden, and proceeded to re-inter the teapot. She said nothing

"I'll give 'ee three pound for un," Martha said. Still Susan remained silent. "Five pound," Mrs. Wisden gasped.

"No, nor ten. I'm surprised to hear you, Martha. Cousin Dan'l Brant willed un to me, an' no doubt he'd his reasons. . . . Have another cup o' tea, Martha?" Susan spoke quietly, though she was pale and her lips quivered.

Mrs. Wisden declined any further refreshment and soon afterwards departed, indignant and defeated. She even felt (and this indicated the depth of her chagrin) that she had made a fool of herself, and that

to Mrs. Tolmer, whom she despised.

Susan's anger soon passed, but a strange excitement remained. The implied sneer that she would never use the teapot because she never entertained company of the teapot's quality pricked the little woman with the dangerous spur of ambition. Why shouldn't she, too, rise in the world? The money from the dead hand of Daniel Brant would soon be in her living hand: it didn't represent wealth, but it opened up bright possibilities. She sat pondering for half an hour before she cleared the table and carried the teapot upstairs.

A week or two later, as Jesse Croct was passing Susan's gate, he heard his name called and saw her standing in the doorway of her cottage, beckoning to him.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"Come here an' I'll tell 'ee, Jesse." She placed the arm-chair for him and then, standing before him with her hands under her apron, she said nervously:

"I've a plan to make money."
"Sure 'tisn't a plan to lose it?"

"There's such a thing as too much carefulness. No risk, no gain, they say."

"That's right 'nough for some," Jesse said, "but not for the likes o' you, Susan. Keep the little you've got."

"Why not double it, an' more?"

"What's your plan? Let's have it straight out," Jesse said.

Mrs. Tolmer unfolded her plan. There

wasn't much to be made out of ordinary "runabout" poultry, but fortunes had been made out of prize birds and special breeds. There was a boom in the higher walks of poultry-keeping. Why shouldn't she invest Daniel Brant's legacy in fine stock? She even suggested that Nether Stanton, by reason of her efforts, might make a name for itself. She did not, however, refer to Mrs. Wisden's visit and her offer to buy the teapot, which was at the root of her sudden ambition.

Jesse was not unmoved by her enthusiasm, but, being a cautious man, he would not encourage it.

"It all sounds very well," he said, "but I couldn't advise 'ee to do anythin' so venturesome. I reckon they swell birds be tricky uns to tend an' rear. An' you'd have to build houses for 'em, an' they cost a mort o' money. Your 'runabouts' lay well an' make good meat, though they mayn't be much to look at."

"I mean to try somethin' better," Susan

said decisively.

"If your mind's fixed on it there's no good me sayin' any more. But go careful, Susan. Dan'l's money'll run away as fast as any other, an' he worked hard to earn it."

This warning caused Susan some uneasiness, but it did not turn her from her purpose. Her simple mind had become dominated by the idea of rising to Mrs. Wisden's level and, as a result, giving occasional parties at which the precious teapot could be used. It was not, perhaps, an exalted ambition, but it was human and touched closely the amenities of village life. To Susan Tolmer there was no world outside Nether Stanton.

When she received Daniel Brant's legacy she set to work with enthusiasm, and enthusiasm feeds its own fire. Two houses were built with enclosed runs; she bought the best breeds of birds at great expense, she laid in stocks of much-advertised poultry foods. Daniel's money, as Jesse had said, did "run away as fast as any other," and Susan was a little alarmed at its depletion. But it would be returned to her twofold.

These happy anticipations, however, were not fulfilled. It may be that she bought badly, or that her humble skill was not equal to the management of aristocratic birds. But however this may be, the shadow of failure soon began to darken her spirit. Valuable birds fell unaccountably sick, and died: the celebrated layers didn't lay so

well as the despised "runabouts." Nether Stanton, which had at first regarded the adventure with a certain pride, now declared that it always knew Mrs. Tolmer would overreach herself. Mrs. Wisden did not repeat her call, but let her opinion that Mrs. Tolmer was an obstinate, foolish woman be known at large. Jesse Croot did not upbraid Susan: he only shook his head and said that luck didn't always come to the most deserving. That moved her to tears.

At the end of a year she was in difficulties. The few choice birds that remained had to be sold, and, of course, prices had dropped. Daniel Brant's legacy had dwindled to a few pounds, and Susan was in debt. Her indebtedness did not amount to much, but she determined to clear herself and make a fresh start—without ambition. How was she to raise the money? She would not appeal to Jesse Croot, and there was no one else in Nether Stanton to aid a person who had so clearly invited disaster.

Dejected, weary, but still uncomplaining, Susan looked at the deserted fowl-houses and barren runs, and racked her brains for a solution of the problem.

III

Jesse Croot's excursions to the neighbouring town of Tanridge (it was seven miles from Nether Stanton) were infrequent. Consequently, when he visited the place, he made a half-day of it, sometimes a whole day. It was a busy little town and its air of bustle excited him. Nobody in Nether Stanton ever seemed to be in a hurry. but in Tanridge quite a number of people appeared, as he put it, to be "goin' thirteen to the dozen." He was greatly interested in the shops: the window of any shop, in fact, interested Jesse, and so his progress along the High Street consisted of slow advances and long pauses. Having completed the perambulation of one side of the street, he repeated the performance on the other.

The one shop that, as a rule, didn't attract him was that of a dealer in second-hand furniture, old china, and general odds and ends of antiquity. Jesse had no taste for "silly knick-knacks." But on this particular afternoon something in the window attracted his attention. He pulled up and stared at it. Was it possible that there could be another teapot precisely like Daniel Brant's treasure? At first he could not believe his eyes: he turned away, rubbed them hard, and looked again. The teapot

was still there: the alligator on the lid was unmistakable. He was a shy man, but he summoned up courage to enter the shop. The proprietor emerged from a back room with a brass tinder-box in one

hand and a duster in the other.

"May I have a sight o' that little ole teapot?" {Jesse asked deferentially. He didn't strike the dealer as being a likely customer for such an article, but he said, "Certainly, sir," and placed the teapot in Jesse's large and rough hands. "Please be careful of it," he added. "That's a rare piece, perfect in every respect."

The wheelwright examined the teapot cautiously and his heart sank: he seemed to hear his old friend's voice saying, "So you see, Jesse, 'tis what's called a heirloom,

an' that's a precious thing."

"I s'pose," he said, "that more than one'd be made the same as this?"

"No doubt, but not many. I dare say that's the only perfect one left."

"There wouldn't likely be two of 'em in

the same parish, so to speak?"

"Most unlikely," said the dealer. "If you happen to know of another for sale, I'd be glad to buy it."

Jesse took the alligator carefully between thumb and forefinger, and lifted the lid to peer into the interior of the teapot. There escaped from it a faint, a very faint, aroma of rum punch. He almost dropped the teapot.

"How did 'ee come by this?" he asked.
"That's my business," said the dealer,

nettled.

"No offence, sir. . . . How much do 'ee ask for un?"

"Five pounds."

"That's a lot o' money."

"People that want such things are prepared to pay the price."

"Maybe I'll call again in a day or two,"

Jesse said.

"Very good," said the dealer. He did not expect to see this strange inquirer

again.

Jesse hurried to the Sun Inn, where he had left his bicycle, and rode back to Nether Stanton, both excited and depressed. He went straight to Mrs. Tolmer's cottage and found the unfortunate poultry-keeper plucking a defunct "runabout."

"I'm just back from Tanridge, Susan." His tone startled her: she glanced up at him and then, bending to her work, sent

the feathers flying.

"I can't abide the place," she said.

"I chanced to look in a shop window an' saw a teapot the very same as Dan'l willed to you."

"Well, I never!" Susan murmured.

"To think you should 'a' done it, Susan!"
"Done what, Jesse?" Her voice was

very faint.

"Sold that precious thing as Dan'l set such store by." Her fingers ceased their

labour, and she sat rigid.

"At first I thought there might be two such teapots. But when I laid hold o' that lizard beast an' took off the lid—why, there was the smell o' the last drink me an' Dan'l had together. 'Twas rum punch, wi' my honey to sweeten it, he bein' out o' sugar. 'Twas a fancy o' Dan'l's to brew it in the ole teapot. I reckon he forgot to wash it out, an' so the blessed smell stayed."

Susan Tolmer lifted up her voice and

wept.

"I own to it, Jesse," she sobbed. "I'm a wicked woman. I was hard pressed. Martha Wisden offered me five pound for un, but I wouldn't touch her money—I'd sooner die first. That dealer chap only give me three pound."

"I don't blame 'ee for not touchin' Martha Wisden's money. Five pound's

what the dealer asks for un."

"The thievin' rascal!" Jesse was so surprised at the violence of this expression from the gentle Mrs. Tolmer that, somehow, he felt relieved.

"I ben't goin' to scold 'ee, Susan. 'Tisn't my place to do that, an' it wouldn't do no good. When a lonely woman's hard pressed she's likely to lose her head. An' you ben't wicked. . . . I've bin thinkin' hard, an' we must get the ole teapot back." Susan looked at him wonderingly through her tears; the sound of her sobs died down.

"You see, Dan'l was my partic'ler friend," Jesse went on, "an' I can't bear to think any wrong should be done to un, though he's dead an' buried out o' sight. Five pound of what he willed to me shall

go to buy him back his own."

" Jesse----"

"Put it that I lend 'ee the money, if that'll please 'ee better. I'll go into Tanridge to-morrow or next day an' fetch that ole teapot home again. Don't worrit 'bout it no more, Susan. You'll soon pull things together an' prosper." With that he left her to shed more tears, but now the penitence was mingled with gratitude.

On the following day Jesse was unable

to leave his work, and it was not until the afternoon of the next that he again rode to Tanridge. Susan awaited his return with expectant eagerness. She got out the empty box in readiness to receive its old tenant, and put on the home-made mourning which she had worn at Daniel Brant's funeral; she felt that this was appropriate to the occasion, even though that occasion were one of subdued rejoicing.

She was sitting on a mildewed bench outside her front door when Jesse Croot swung down the road, pushed open the gate with unusual violence, and advanced up the narrow path. His hands were empty.

"'Tis gone, Susan," he said. "Sold this

very day."

"'Tis a judgment on me!"

"I wouldn't say that. Don't 'ee mix up hard luck wi' judgments. . . . I a'most knocked down that dealer chap when he wouldn't tell me who'd bought the teapot. A mean skunk o' a man, that. Does nothin' for his livin' but buy cheap an' sell dear."

"A judgment all the same, Jesse. I'd got the box ready for un an' all."

She led him into the cottage and pointed

at the box on the table.

"Put the lid on, for sake's sake," Jesse said, "an' then we shan't be lookin' into emptiness." She obeyed him, and then they sat for some time in silence, gazing at each other.

"Well, we can't do nothin'," Jesse said at last. "I'm main sorry. I can a'most smell that punch now. Dan'l enjoyed it fine. Don't 'ee cry, Susan, that'll do no good."

The gate clicked, there was the sound of determined footsteps on the path, and then

a sharp knocking at the door.

"Martha Wisden, as sure as life," Susan said. She opened the door and stood face to face with Mrs. Wisden. Martha stepped across the threshold without ceremony. She carried a rush basket. When she saw Jesse she said:

"I thought to find 'ee alone, Susan." Jesse did not take the hint; he scented trouble. If he were not definitely told to go he would remain. He had no liking for Mrs. Wisden. Jesse's presence, however, did not deter her. She nodded to him and sat down.

"I was in Tanridge this mornin'," she said, "an' picked up a teapot just the very same as Cousin Dan'l Brant's. Leastways, I think 'tis the same." She took a parcel

from the rush bag, untied it carefully, and revealed the Wedgwood teapot. She placed it on the table and looked at it with her head on one side. Then she shot a glance of deep suspicion at Susan.

"I was never more surprised in me life," she continued, "than when I saw it in Webber's window. It took me breath away. So I went in an' bought it. Five pound was the price." Again Mrs. Wisden shot a glance at Susan, who, poor soul, could not conceal her agitation.

"A won'erful thing to happen," Jesse

said.

"I've brought it along so's to compare it side by side wi' Dan'l Brant's ole teapot, if Susan'll be so kind as to let me see it." Mrs. Wisden gazed fixedly at the box, whose emptiness was happily concealed by the cover. Susan was at her wits' end. Then a wave of indignation gave her words: her face flushed, her eyes shot defiance.

"The last time you saw Cousin Dan'l Brant's teapot," she said, "you insulted me by offerin' to buy un, because the likes o' me could have no use for such a precious thing. An' I said to meself, 'that's the last time Martha Wisden shall set eyes on it.'"

"That was very wrong, Mrs. Wisden, to want to buy what had bin willed specially to Mrs. Tolmer," Jesse said.

"Right or wrong, Mr. Croot, 'tis no business o' yours," cried Martha, "an' I'll

thank you not to interfere."

"Dan'l was my partic'ler friend, an' I reckon I've a right to speak. He'd a reason for willin' the ole teapot to Mrs. Tolmer. He asked my advice about it, an' I agreed wi' un."

"What reason, if I may ask?" said Mrs. Wisden, now scarcely able to control her

rising anger.

"He'd a notion," said Jesse, calmly, "that you, in your pride o' heart, might take it into use too often, and then it'd get broke, for certain sure. He could trust Mrs. Tolmer, you see, she not bein' one to make a show."

"I should think not, indeed," Martha jerked out. "So 'tis partly your fault, Mr. Croot, that the teapot was willed to Susan?"

"That's right, Mrs. Wisden. But now you've got another one just the very same—why, there's nothin' more to trouble your-

self about."

"But is it the very same? That's what I've come to find out... Will 'ee open

that box, Susan, an' bring out Dan'l's moments there was tense silence, save for the clucking of the "runabouts" round the teapot?" 'I've said a'ready that I won't show back door. un to 'ee again." Šusan's courage was rising. She looked appealingly at Jesse, who nodded his head gravely. "Seein' how things be," he "I wouldn't say but what you're right, Mrs. Tol-mer." Mrs. Wisden quivered with anger. "'Tis my belief," she cried shrilly,

Her elbow caught the teapot and swept it to the floor, where it smashed on the uncovered tiles."

"that this teapot what I bought at Webber's is Cousin Dan'l's. Everyone knows that Susan's bin a fool an' wasted his money. . . . I want that box opened." Both Susan and Jesse sat perfectly still; for a few

Suddenly Mrs. Wisden leant forward and shot out both hands towards the box. The movement was ill-judged. Her elbow caught the teapot and swept it to the floor, where it was smashed on the uncovered tiles.

"That comes of a too-inquirin' mind," Jesse said. "'Tis a pity, all the same. Five pound gone to atoms, so to speak."

said, the words coming huskily. "I'll never believe that this wasn't Dan'l's precious teapot, an' now 'tis no more than



That comes of a too-inquirin' mind,' Jesse said. 'Tis a pity, all the same. Five pound gone to atoms so to speak.''

Mrs. Wisden went down on her knees and put the fragments, one by one, into her rush basket. When she rose to her feet she glared witheringly at the other two.
"'Twas your fault, the pair of 'ee," she

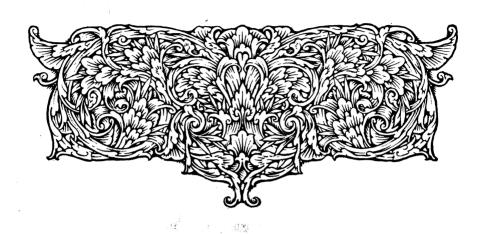
rubbish." She grasped the handle of the basket, turned, and went out, slamming the door behind her. Jesse grinned and rubbed his hands together.

"'Twas a near thing, Susan," he said,

"a tarr'ble near thing!" Susan hid her face in her hands.

"But the teapot," she wailed, "Dan'l's precious teapot!"

"Don't 'ee worry 'bout that. The way it happened would 'a' pleased Dan'l. He'd 'a' laughed hearty. He never could abide that Martha Wisden wi' her silly pride."



BY THE GREAT NORTH ROAD.

TINKER, tailor, what would you be?
Oh, a tinker's job is the best for me—
Whistle and sing, hammer and glank,
By the wayside ditch and the hedgerow bank.

I am the man

To mend your kettle and can—(Fetch 'em out!)
Before the cock in the morn has crowed,
My bellows I blow by the Great North Road.

Tinker, tailor, what would you be?
Oh, a tinker's job it is fine and free—
A chunk of bread and a hunk of cheese,
Where's the dinner that's better than these?

I am the man

To mend your pot and pan—(Fetch 'em out!) With nothing owing, and nothing owed,
My bellows I blow by the Great North Road.

Tinker, tailor, what would you be?
Oh, a tinker's job is the best you'll see—
With a snug little tent, a trig little cart,
A patient horse and a cheerful heart.

I am the man

That mends things all he can—(Fetch 'em out!).
Till the ash is grey where the red fire glowed,
My bellows I blow by the Great North Road.

MAY BYRON.



"For half an hour he sat on his bed, sweating and trembling, nerving himself to be brave,"

THE COWARD

By RALPH DURAND

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

ATOPE-TOPE is as near the heart of Central Africa as railways have yet reached. It has a staple population of thirty-five Englishmen— Government officials and merchants—and one Englishwoman, Sister Jones, whose duty it is to take the temperatures of feverstricken patients in the hospital and persuade them that invalid food is not so nasty as they think it is. It is a sleepy little place during fifty-one weeks in the year, but at Christmas-time men congregate there from everywhere within three days' journey, and last year's popular songs are heard in the street from early dawn till long after everyone ought to be in bed. On Christmas Day the Magistrate gives a picnic

on the lake shore and Sister Jones receives about twenty offers of marriage from men overcome by the novelty of having a white woman to talk to.

It was two days before Christmas. The counters of all the European stores were spread with the bedding of men who had come to town too late to secure places in the corridor of the one galvanised-iron hotel. In the hotel itself men were playing billiard-fives, which is very bad for billiard-tables, and indoor-polo, which is played with chairs in place of ponies and is very bad for furniture. Others were dancing foxtrots to the music of a gramophone, orchestrally accompanied by comb-and-tissue-paper mouthorgans and biscuit-tin drums. Only one

man was holding aloof from the racket. He was a stranger, newly arrived from the coast by the bi-weekly train, and looked as ill at ease as a lap-dog in a kennel of foxhounds.

Dearing should have been a Minor Canon in some sleepy cathedral town. He was too timid by temperament to be happy in a boisterous world. As a boy, after one nerveracking term at a public school, his education had been entrusted to a governess with a taste for botany and butterflies. The bov. being docile and clever, had learned all that she could teach him. At Cambridge, where he had taken all his exercise with a butterflynet and a collecting-box, he had learned a great deal more, so much more that his tutor showed an essay of his on Some Neglected Aspects of the Bumble Bee to the Vice-Chancellor, who sent it to the President of the Royal Society, who in turn passed it on to the greatest living authority on cockroaches, with the result that at the age of twenty-four Dearing was offered a special appointment under the Colonial Office to take his microscope out to Central Africa and join in the international war against tropical disease.

Everyone who knew Dearing personally said that a man who nearly always lost his head when he had to cross a crowded street, was quite unfit to go to such a place as Central Africa. It was exactly for that reason that Dearing accepted the appointment. He was bitterly conscious of his own timidity, he had tried every means, from Sandow exercises to hypnotic suggestion, to cure himself of it, and he had a secret hope that life in a country which he believed to be thickly infested with lions, buffaloes, poisonous snakes and truculent savages, by inuring him to real dangers might harden him to disregard imaginary ones.

He seemed so anxious to efface himself, that none of the rioters in the Nyanza hotel spoke to him until a sudden rush of indoorpolo players knocked him headlong into the middle of the orchestra. Then the conductor of the band, a grey-haired gentleman with a Christmas-cracker paper cap on his head, picked him up and offered his hand.

"You're Dearing, I suppose. I'm the P.M.O. I'd have come to meet you if I'd known the train was in. It doesn't usually turn up till late in the afternoon."

"It got in soon after sunrise," said Dearing, apologetically dodging a toy balloon.

"It must have had unusual luck," said the P.M.O. "Often they have to stop on

the way to remove the corpse of a giraffe or something else that has committed suicide under the front axle of the engine. Come over to my quarters, where we can hear our own voices."

The Principal Medical Officer led the way across a dusty open space that quivered in the fierce sunshine, to a deep-verandahed red-brick hospital, there introduced him to Sister Jones, who was decorating the wards with the feathery branches of a scarlet-flowered tree, and took him into a room, set round with cases of surgical instruments, that smelt of disinfectant.

"You've come just in time to tackle a big job," said the P.M.O. "A mysterious disease has broken out in some lake villages two days' journey from here, and I want you to investigate it. Will you be ready to start as soon as Christmas is over?"

Dearing caressed a hack on the shin that he had received from the indoor-polo players and said he was ready to start at once.

"That's the right spirit," said the P.M.O. "Well now, you know, of course, heartily. that we pill-and-powder wallahs in Central Africa are up against more plagues than ever Pharaoh knew. Some of them we are beginning to know something about; some we only pretend to understand. But the more we learn, the more convinced we are that nine African diseases out of ten are disseminated by insects. The mosquito inoculates men with malarial fever. tsetse fly spreads sleeping sickness. suspect cockroaches of carrying leprosy. When a new disease crops up, we put one insect after another into the dock and try him. When we convict the offender, we next examine his life habits, learn how and where he breeds and what he has for his tea when he can't find a human being. When we've learned that, we can begin to devise means of exterminating him. But you know all that, of course?

Dearing modestly admitted that he had written a thesis on Filariasis for his degree at Cambridge.

"Good! But you don't know anything about the new disease, because nobody does. No one ever heard of it until two months ago it was reported that the people in some fishing villages on the lake shore were dying like flies—or rather, at a rate that as a doctor I wish to goodness flies would die at. The symptoms are first, bodily lethargy, then mental lethargy, generally quickly followed by coma and death. It's so new that even the natives themselves haven't a

name for it. It'll be the privilege of whoever discovers the cause of it to give it a name. Until then I've temporarily labelled it A.D.D. The first initial stands for Another, the last for Disease, and the middle one for an adjective that expressed my feelings when it cropped up right in the busy part of the fever season. Until I know what causes it, all I can do is to give patients powerful stimulants and trust to luck for the rest."

Two days later Dearing transhipped from a lake-steamer into a dug-out canoe, unseaworthy as a wash-tub, that his native staff poled through winding channels of yellow-green swamp. Every time the craft wobbled Dearing grasped the sides in terror, and it was a relief to step ashore in a village that was already half ruined, because those of its inhabitants that were not already smitten with the disease were so certain that they were doomed to get it, that repairs did not seem worth while.

It was a dismal place. Sad-coloured swamp stretched to the horizon in every direction. The hot-house air was heavy with the sickly, sour-sweet smell of decaying vegetation. Marsh flies—great, fat, greasy flies that bit painfully—swarmed everywhere. The ground underfoot was alive with insects that hopped or crawled. As the sun set rain fell with a roar that drowned the croaking of the frogs. It penetrated the double roof of Dearing's tent, so that he dined with his feet in mud and his waterproof buttoned up to his chin. Not till he tasted a brown, lukewarm mess that his native cook had taken from a tin, did he remember that it was Christmas Day.

Dearing had been supplied with three servants: Panja, the cook, who knew enough English to make himself misunderstood; Mlulu, who knew how to handle a shot-gun, and whose duty it was to provide Dearing with any bird, beast, fish or insect that he needed for his experiments; and Nyoki, a wood-and-water-getter, who was to do any odd job that did not require a high degree of intelligence. Dearing had had conscientious objections to taking men from a comparatively healthy locality to a disease-stricken village, but the P.M.O. had brushed them

"You can't go alone," he said. "The people at the village are ignorant fishermen, who would be no more use to you than a sick headache. If A.D.D. is to be stamped out, someone has got to be sacrificed. You'll be working for the good of the native, so it's perfectly fair to make natives run the

risk. You can give them double pay, if you like, and charge it to your expenses account."

A problem that soon arose revived Dearing's scruples. He had made Mlulu catch a number of blood-sucking insects; ticks, fleas, marsh-flies and others even more repulsive. But to put these to their full use they had to be kept alive and fed on human blood. Whose blood was to feed them? As none of the natives realised that whoever fed them ran the gravest risk of dying a painful death from A.D.D., Dearing considered it his duty to feed them himself.

One day an Assistant Collector, touring his district, went a day's journey off his route to pay Dearing a friendly visit, and found him with a cupping glass on his arm giving a dozen ticks their breakfast.

"That's a dangerous thing you're doing," he said. "Why don't you make your boys do it?"

Dearing was afraid of being jeered at if he gave his real reason.

"I want to make sure that it's done properly," he said.

"But you could stand over them while they do it."

"They mightn't like it," said Dearing lamely.

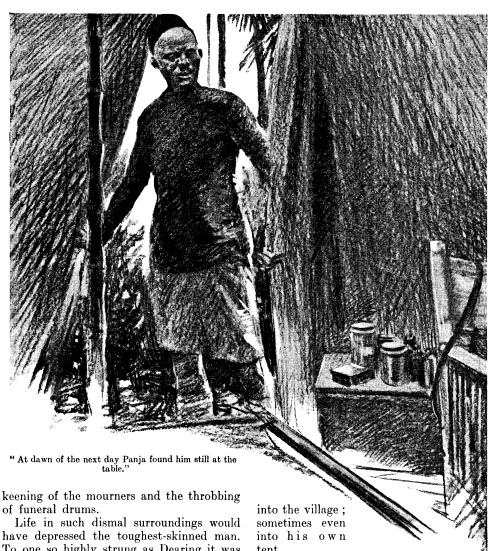
"Knock their heads together till they do," said the Assistant Collector. "Hang it all! It's them you are working for."

The Assistant Collector had a reputation for pluck in a community that did not include many cowards, but he had not pluck enough to spend more than an hour or so in the disease-smitten village. When next he met a fellow white man, he made amends for a wrong he had done Dearing.

"D'you remember that new bug-hunter of the P.M.O.'s who turned up at Matopetope just before Christmas?" he said. "D'you remember my saying that I believed he'd turn green about the gills if a sheep baa'd at him? By Jove! I take it all back. That fellow has got more real grit in his little finger than you and I have in our whole carcases."

It was a pity Dearing did not know that his fame as a man of iron courage was spreading over the country, for he badly needed encouragement. The hand of the death they could not understand lay heavy on the villagers among whom he lived. Those that were still hale went about their daily work, dragging their nets in the swamp and visiting their fish-traps, without the cheery clamour that Africans love. Those that

were smitten lay motionless in the full sunshine and were generally too apathetic to move when the rainstorms broke. Every face that Dearing saw was sullen with despair. Every night was noisy with the festooned in the trees, hunting for frogs in the swamp, or lying torpid on the path. A rustle of wind in the grass would send a cold stab to his heart and cause him to leap wildly away from it. Snakes often came



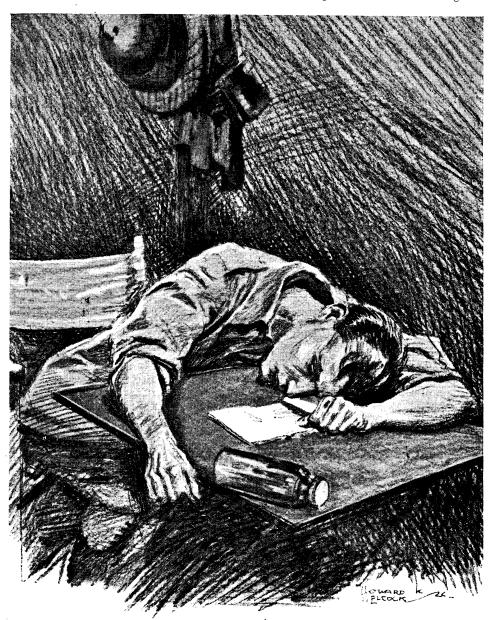
of funeral drums.

have depressed the toughest-skinned man. To one so highly strung as Dearing it was torture. He lived, too, in a daily misery of fear, mostly unfounded. When the wailings for the dead were more than usually noisy, he feared lest wild grief should break out into wilder riot. When Panja, affected by the general gloom, looked sulky, he scarcely dared to eat lest his servant should have poisoned his food. He had, too, real fears to face. As the rainy season advanced the water of the swamp rose, driving on to the island snakes by the hundred. Dearing never left the village without seeing them

tent.

One morning he woke to the roar of heavy rain and found the floor of his tent running with water. He wriggled into his clothes without putting his feet to the ground, then stretched out his hand for the knee-boots that were his only suitable footwear for such a day. One of them seemed unusually heavy. Peering into it, he saw that a puff-adder had taken refuge in it from the cold and damp. He cautiously put the boot down again and considered what to do. To have fired a charge of shot through it would have ruined one of his only pair of adequately water-tight boots. To have ordered a barefooted servant to face the danger of killing it seemed monstrously unjust. For

first five minutes that followed he was too much engaged in being violently sick to think coherently. Then a wonderful discovery made him happy. He realised that, coward though he was, he had courage of a



"The pen had fallen from his fingers, his head was lying on an unfinished page."

half an hour he sat on his bed, sweating and trembling, nerving himself to be brave. Then he took the boot gingerly by the heel, shook the puff-adder out of it and broke its back with the butt of his gun. For the

desperate kind that he could summon up if he tried hard enough. It made him hold his head higher than he had ever held it before.

The discovery brought light to the gloom

of his life. But the work he had to do was inexpressibly monotonous. To examine a new insect is interesting enough to a scientist, but the interest wanes when a hundred of its kind have been examined, and becomes wearisome drudgery when the hundreds merge into thousands. Dearing knew that a scientist does not hit on a great discovery without working hard for it. He knew that when Ross triumphantly discovered the malaria germ in the stomach of a mosquito, he had already on that day alone examined the stomachs of eight hundred mosquitoes, and he knew that that moment of triumph had been preceded by five barren years spent in following false clues into blind alleys. But Ross triumphed at last, and he himself had no certainty that he would ever triumph at all.

Within a few days of his arrival in the swamp he had discovered the A.D.D. germ by taking specimens of the blood of those who were afflicted with the disease—though the sight of anyone's blood but his own made him feel sick-and comparing it under the microscope with blood drawn from men in good health. But this was not enough, and though the hours he sat over his microscope were limited only by the power of his eves to stand the strain, he seemed to get no nearer learning how the germ got there. Besides insects, Mlulu brought him birds, fishes, frogs, snails, anything he could find, and he examined them all. Once or twice he made a discovery that seemed at first to lead to something. He discovered the germ in the stomach of a little wading bird, but the discovery led nowhere because he could think of no way by which the germ passed from the bird—which seemed none the worse for it—into the blood of human beings. found it also in the stomach of a fish, but that discovery, too, led nowhere, because the fish was too small and bony to be worth eating by man. In both cases, too, the germ was dead. He found the living germ also in the blood of a water-snail, and even that discovery seemed to lead nowhere.

Four weary months dragged by, and still in his fortnightly letter to the P.M.O. Dearing had "nothing to report." Then one day Nyoki developed symptoms of A.D.D. and an examination of his blood showed that he had contracted the disease. Dearing spent the rest of the day in an examination of his servants' persons and bedding, to ascertain whether the odd-job boy had been harbouring any parasite from which Panja and Mulu were free: but that search too

was fruitless. He next considered deeply in what essential way Nyoki's work had differed from that of his fellow-servants, and had resembled that of the villagers. He began to see light. As laundry-man Nyoki had spent part of each day up to his knees in water, pounding Dearing's shirts against a stranded log. Always on his return to dry land he had had to remove a score or so of leeches from his legs. The villagers who set their nets in the swamp channels were also preyed upon by leeches. Panja and Mlulu, who washed themselves a limb at a time with water from a jar, were not troubled with them.

All that night Dearing sat in thought, fitting together piece by piece what he now knew about the A.D.D. germ. In the morning he took off his trousers, waded into the swamp and collected a dozen water-snails. When he returned to land he put each snail into a jar full of water with two leeches taken from his own legs to keep it company. He almost shouted with triumph when he saw that in each jar the leeches swam straight up to the snail, attached themselves to it and resumed their interrupted meal. On the next day he took one leech from each iar and examined it under the microscope. Seven out of the twelve had the A.D.D. germs in their stomachs. He took the five snails from the jars from which the germfree leeches had been taken and found that they too were free of the germ. He then examined the remaining seven snails and found that each of them had the germ in its blood.

He had now a practical theory to work on—the snail was the original host of the germ and leeches carried it from the snails' blood to human blood—all that remained to do was to prove it. He took the seven remaining leeches that had fed on the infected snails and applied them to his own arm. Twice daily for the next five days he examined his own blood under the microscope, and on the fifth day his triumph was complete—he found his blood swarming with the germ he sought.

In all Africa, perhaps, at that moment there was no happier man. He had discovered the cause of a disease that had already devastated three villages, and might, if undiscovered, have devastated a hundred more. He had, moreover, added a solid foundation-stone of his own to the plinth on which the temple of Science is built. And he was not yet twenty-five!

There was abundant work to do now.

Logic had shown him the cause of the disease. Sheer luck had shown him a way to fight it. Clearly the bony little fish and the wading bird, in whose stomachs he had found dead A.D.D. germs, befriended man by preying on the water-snails and leeches, and thus intercepting the germs before they could infect the blood of human beings. The problem now was how to increase the numbers of these birds and fishes so as to decrease the number of germ-carrying snails and leeches. Eventually the Administration must enact ordinances to protect them both and train natives as marsh-wardens to see that the ordinances were obeyed, but before that could be done it was necessary carefully to study their life-history from the egg to maturity.

Suddenly Dearing realised that the continuation of the work he had begun must in all probability be left to other hands. had inoculated himself with a disease that he had discovered how to prevent but that doctors had not yet learned how to cure. Now that he realised this, he was amazed to find that, though he expected death, he felt no fear of it. He was troubled only by the thought of how much he had to do before he died, and how little time he would have in which to do it.

If he did not make haste to write a report of his discovery, it would die with him. His four months' work in the dismal swamp would be barren. His whole life would have been wasted.

He opened his notebook and wrote "A.D.D." in big letters at the top of a fresh page. Underneath, because it was now his undoubted right to give the new disease a scientific name, after racking his brain for the scientific name of the leech, he wrote LETHARGICA HIRODINEASIS, and with a glow of pride added DEARINGIENSIS. As he wrote, a sensation of heaviness in his hand and arm—a feeling as if the bones were filled with lead—puzzled him. Then he realised that the disease was already beginning to master him. With an effort he shook off the lethargy that was creeping over him and began to write again. But when he had covered one page, he realised that part of what he had written was illegible even to himself. Some of the words were misspelt: some of the sentences meaningless. Again he screwed up his energies and rewrote the page, pausing before each letter, like a conscientious elementary schoolboy at his copybook, to rivet his attention on what he was doing.

Earlier in the day Mlulu had been sent away in the canoe to intercept and get supplies from the fortnightly lake-steamer. Towards sundown he returned, bringing a letter from the P.M.O. that contained orders for Dearing to return at once to Matopetope. By the merest fluke, the P.M.O. said, he himself had discovered the host of the A.D.D. germ. There was therefore no need for Dearing to remain in the disease-smitten village, whereas he would be very useful at Matope-tope in helping to prepare a full report of the discovery, an outline of which had already been telegraphed home.

Dearing did not stop to read the letter. By the time it arrived his brain was numbing so fast and he had still so much to write that every moment was precious. Panja brought his evening meal but he could spare no time to eat it. At dawn of the next day Pania found him still at the table. The pen had fallen from his fingers, his head was lying on an unfinished page. When the man tried to rouse him, he could only moan and clutch feebly at the notebook, as if he feared that it might be snatched from him.

The P.M.O. was a happy man. He was in the Magistrate's office, proudly flaunting a telegram from the Colonial Secretary that warmly congratulated him on his discovery and granted him special leave, so that he could return to England at once and announce the discovery in person to all scientific bodies interested in it, when Nurse Jones hurried across from the hospital and beckoned him outside.

"Mr. Dearing's boys have just brought him in," she said. "They came all the way by canoe. He seems to have got A.D.D. and

I think he is dying."

"Poor chap!" said the P.M.O. compassionately as he accompanied her back to the hospital. "Life isn't very just, nurse. He spends months in a beastly swamp, doing jolly conscientious work, too, by what one hears of him, and achieves nothing. I stay here in comfort and safety and by mere chance tumble across the discovery he was looking for. I get the kudos. He gets the disease. Rough on him, isn't it? Is he conscious?"

"Half conscious, I think. He has a notebook clasped in his hands, and he moaned and struggled when I tried to take it from him."

The P.M.O. looked at the patient, went to his surgery and returned with a hypodermic syringe.

"Desperate cases justify desperate remedies," he said. "It's quite on the cards that what I am going to give him will kill him outright. If he isn't dead in half an hour, there's just a chance that he will pull through."

As the drug began to take effect Dearing's clasped hands relaxed. The notebook fell on to the bed. The P.M.O. picked it up and showed the nurse a page covered with

illegible scrawls.

"Pathetic!" he said. "I suppose he was trying to write some last message. "I'll take it along to the surgery and see if I can

make anything of it."

At the surgery door Panja and Mlulu were anxious to show how careful they had been to bring away all their master's property. They opened his steel-lined trunk and showed a litter, surmounted by a microscope, of books, boots, shirts, socks, glass jars containing beetles, flies, ticks, snails, tadpoles and leeches, and some broken microscope slides. The P.M.O. chose a broken slide

at random and put it into his own microscope

Half an hour later he went back to the ward with another cablegram form in his hand. He was not looking quite as jubilant as when he had taken the first into the Magistrate's office. But Nurse Jones greeted him with a smile of triumph.

"I believe he is turning the corner," she said. "He is sleeping naturally and already

his pulse is much stronger."

The P.M.O. bent over the bed, and when he looked up again his eyes were shining.

"As soon as he is able to understand what you say," he said, "tell him about this cablegram that I'm sending home. It'll give him heart to fight for his life."

Nurse Jones took the cablegram and

read:

Reference A.D.D. I omitted in my former cable to say that discovery was made by my pathologist, Dearing, to whom all the credit is due.



WHERE YOU PASS.

YOU come to me among the sticks and stones
Of some drab city street that has no grace;
And looking on your thin, pale, blossoming face
Long-dead romances waken in my bones.

Would you believe that lovely deeds are fled ... That cunning, well-kept clocks have ticked away The rarer magic of another day?

Ah, take your mirror, Sweet my Goldenhead!

I tell you, where you pass, a lovely Queen Rides a white palfrey sweetly through the light; And I, the most unworthy, am your knight, And Love, the romance Love has always been.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

ARTHUR HENRY AND THE WELL-WISHERS

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

HEN William Bryant Morton became engaged to Jessica Elizabeth Sands he was just as pleased as she was; but, being of the shy sex, he didn't want to make a show of it. He would have preferred to take Jessica into quiet corners instead of her taking him round to exhibit to all her relatives. However, he submitted with a reasonably good grace, until she proposed to take him to Miss Maidment, who lived next door to the Sandses. Then he made a protest.

"I say, Jess," he objected, with some feeling. "You've got to draw the line somewhere. She isn't a relation, you know."

"She takes such an interest in us," Jessica explained, "poor old thing. She told mother that, last night, when she went into the lumber-room to pull the blind down, she saw us talking under the pear tree, and——"

"Your mother can't say anything now we're engaged," William observed; "but we'll keep close under the wall in future."

"Yes," Jessica agreed. "She said it reminded her of her courting days."

"Oh!" said William. "Funny to think of her going in for it!"

"I don't see anything funny about it," Jessica declared. "She must have been quite good looking once. She isn't bad now for forty. She says thirty-eight, but you needn't be particular to a year or two at that age. He was drowned at sea. She keeps his smoker's cabinet in the drawing-room, on top of the corner cupboard. I'd like you to see that, because it's the sort I want."

"The smoker's cabinet?"

"No, no, boy; the corner cupboard. She's never got over it, and wouldn't have

anybody else. I shouldn't. She might have had several husbands—"

"Eh ?"

"You know what I mean. She wouldn't put anyone in his place. She's an example to you, if I go and get drowned. Seriously, Bill, it would please her, if we called; and me!"

"You're like an organ-grinder with a new monkey! All right. Put me through my tricks again. Let's go in and get it over, if we must."

They called the next evening. Miss Maidment received them very pleasantly; kissed Jessica; shook hands with William; said, "God bless you both. It's nice to see you together, you happy young things! I am an old maid, but not a grudging old maid. You needn't take that stiff chair, Mr. Morton. I keep it for people I want to get rid of quickly; collectors and that sort. You'd better sit on the sofa with Jessica. I'll tell Mary to bring some coffee and cakes, and then we'll talk about all the things that you mean to do."

Miss Maidment was so friendly and so interested in their future that they told her quite a lot about their plans. William, who was the planner-in-chief, was usually reticent (except to Jessica), but he felt communicative toward Miss Maidment. He even told her their great idea about taking the little house at the corner of Morris Street, when the Pratts went out in nine months' time, and how he meant to enlarge the shed to take in the side-car. He explained that to keep a side-car was really an economy, because it saved the expenditure on other recreations, and upon doctor's bills. He emphasised the fact that they had planned

out their income and expenses so that they could save twenty pounds a year, and half his future rises. He stated that, of course, he should insure his life, "as any man with responsibilities should." He pointed out that these calculations demonstrated that they had enough to get married on. He added that they considered it was best "to do it young," and "get into your stride from the start.'

"Bill thinks things out so!" Jessica said admiringly.

"He reminds me of someone I've met," Bill said, wrinkling his forehead in an effort to fit in the resemblance.

"You wouldn't have met him," Miss Maidment said. "He went down at sea, sixteen years ago. I was Jess's age then; two-and-twenty. This picture scarcely does him justice. This was his cigarette-case. I gave it to him on his birthday."

She lifted a cigarette-case from a side table and handed it to William. He turned it over; looked at the initials cut upon it.



"'You wouldn't have met him,' Miss Maidment said. 'He went down at sea, sixteen years ago.'"

"He reminds me of someone else," Miss Maidment remarked. "He planned things out." She wiped her eyes.

Jessica pressed Bill's arm, and nodded at the smoker's cabinet upon the corner cupboard. She mentioned that it belonged to the gentleman that Miss Maidment was engaged to; finally persuaded her to produce the picture of a well-looking young man, cut from an old illustrated paper, "published at the time."

"A.H.S.," he read aloud.

"Arthur Henry Smith," Miss Maidment "He was wrecked in the Caletold him. donian."

William dropped the cigarette-case, but saved it by grabbing with the other hand.

"What's the matter, Bill?" Jessica asked.

"Did I joggle you?"

"I trod on my own toe," he explained. "I like the case, Miss Maidment, and-and the way you remember things."

"It is better to have had an interest in life and have lost it, than never to have had anyone," Miss Maidment claimed. "It stops one from being a bitter old maid, you see."

She laughed faintly.

"I see," William agreed thoughtfully. "You can't be bitter about it, when it's your

own choice to remain single."

"That's just it," Miss Maidment said. "It gives you a certain standing with yourself, if it doesn't with other people. . . .

"Bill," Jessica said, when they left Miss Maidment's and went to her house via the back garden, "you're a kind old thing, when anybody really knows you. You're quite pippy over her Arthur Henry."

It's pitiful," he said. "Pitiful! To see a lady like that wasting her life over a-

"Ssh, Bill, dear," Jessica entreated.



"'He reminds me of someone I've met,' Bill said, wrinkling his forehead."

"Better than nobody, eh?" Bill sug-

gested with a grin.

"She thinks better than anybody," said Miss Maidment; "as I did. Mind you don't undeceive her! Yes, I am glad to have had a lover, though he was taken from me. I don't look upon myself as a wallflower, but as an engaged person."

"Yes," the boy agreed. "Yes.... He was taken from somebody jolly nice."

"Not wasting. It wouldn't be wasting my life if anything happened to you, and I was faithful to your memory. . . . Your old memory. . . . Oh! I hope I should be."

"I don't suppose I'm worth it," William

said. "Anyhow, he wasn't."
"Oh, Bill!" the girl cried. "You shouldn't be so ready to think badly of anyone. How can you know he wasn't nice."

"Because," William said, "he— Look

here, Jess? You will hold your tongue about it, won't you? Just for once? He wasn't drowned. He was picked up; and he evidently cut off and didn't come back to her... I can tell you who he is. Arthur Henry Smith, of Read and Smith's in Barbara Lane. He's the managing partner. He was wrecked in the Caledonian—there's a picture of the ship in the waiting-room—but picked up at sea after being in a boat for two days. Their deputy cashier told me about it a few months ago. Evidently she didn't hear of that; and he took the chance to be off with her. And she's been mourning him, and waiting for him for sixteen years!"

"Oh, Bill!" Jessica wailed. "Oh, Billy boy!... And she might easily have found someone else. Mother always says she believes that several men here would have liked her, if she hadn't made it so plain that there'd never be anyone but 'Arthur Henry.' He's just spoilt her life."

"Perhaps," William said, "if she knew, she might get somebody else now?...
But there's no telling how she would take it."

"She's been set on him for sixteen years,"
Jessica pointed out; "got used to it...."
"And, of course," William observed,

"And, of course," William observed, "looking at things sensibly, she's grown rather old for it; very likely wouldn't get anyone else. I thought over all that after I nearly dropped the cigarette-case. I do think things out, you know, Jess."

"You're so thorough," Jess approved.

"Father says so."

"A man's got to be," William explained, "if he means to get on. I always did. Now I have you to think of, as well as myself. So of course I feel doubly responsible. I thought it out, and concluded that it was no use knocking down her plaster image. It's all she's got; better than nothing. You think that's right, don't you, Jess? It's no use taking her precious Arthur Henry from her, eh?"

"Is he married?" Jessica asked.

"Old Smith? Not that I know of. I could find out; but what does it matter?"

"Suppose there was some misunderstanding?" Jessica suggested. "Suppose he came home and she had gone away? Or he wrote and she didn't get the letters? She must have been ill, not to have seen in the papers that he was rescued. He may think that she is dead, you see, Bill."

"That's an idea," William agreed. "You do have ideas. You're cleverer than you know, but not so sensible as you think! . . .

If he'd wanted her much he'd have hunted for her and found her, like I jolly well should you!... Still, there'd be no harm in finding out if the old fossil is married. I'll try to run up against Lonnon at lunch-time tomorrow. He's the deputy cashier chap that I mentioned."

"I'll come and meet the bus," Jessica stated (rather unnecessarily, as she always did), "so that you can tell me all about it. Just fancy if you and I should put it all right for her!"

"Umph!" said William. "You never can keep your little fingers out of other peo-

ple's pies."

"You can't," Jessica explained, "if you take a kind and proper interest in people. I'll tell you what mother tells father when he calls her a busybody: Curiosity comes from kindness! Oh, Bill! If only we could put it right!"

"Anyhow," William said, "if you come and meet me to-morrow I'll look upon it as

kindness, as well as curiosity."

"Well," Jessica said, seizing William's arm, as he jumped from the bus, in her usual proprietary fashion. (The conductor watched them with his usual tolerant grin.) "Is he?"

"Is who what?" William inquired aggra-

vatingly.

"You just answer a plain question, if you don't want to get into trouble," she advised him.

"Then he isn't—if you mean married. Lonnon says he's a real old bachelor; a male old maid; and that's the worst sort."

"See what I'm going to save you from?

What else have you found out?"

"Nothing, except that he's a fussy old beggar who wouldn't be much catch for her."

"That depends on her," Jessica explained.
"Women like fussy old things, if they're all right in other ways. Is he the sort who would do a mean thing, like running away and hiding from her, to get out of his engagement?"

"I couldn't ask that outright, you know. I asked Lonnon how he liked himself at Read and Smith's, to lead up to the bosses. He spoke of old Smith as a very straight chap, and quite decent to the staff, if you humoured his prejudices. He has a lot of fads about indexing things, Lonnon says. They call him 'Card Index'! I declared I'd heard someone complain that the old beggar played it low on him; just to see if I could draw anything. Lonnon was

furious. He insisted that Smith was the most conscientious old fellow he'd ever met, and couldn't do a shabby trick if he tried. 'No one could say a thing against him, except he's an old fusser!' he declared, 'and, hang it all, he's a competent fusser, and always fusses his way to the right thing in the end.'"

"Rather like me!" said Jessica. "Well,

Billy boy? What's to be done?"

"You can tell her about him, if you like," William proposed; "or put your mother on to it."

"But, if he isn't all right," Jessica objected, "she'd better not hear about him. We agreed to that last night. You ought to tell him about her!"

"What!" William gasped. "Me! Tell him!... Here, go on fussing your way to the right thing in the end! You aren't even warm yet. Perhaps you'd like to go and tell the old man."

"Um-m-m! If you daren't tell him you couldn't expect me to. . . . Could we put an advert. in the papers? He might see it."

"Or she might!" William scoffed. "Just

as likely to."

"Don't you make all the difficulties. Think of something we could do. It's your turn."

"The only thing I can think of," William said, "is to write to him. I can get his private address. It's in the Telephone Directory, I expect. We could mark the letter 'private'; and tell him about her."

"And what we think he ought to do?"

Jessica suggested.

"No. If he wants to do it, he will, and if he doesn't, he won't. If he doesn't want to go to her, he's no use to her, Jess."

"No. . . . We shouldn't tell him who we were, and he wouldn't care what we thought, if we did. . . . Perhaps he does want to know about her. I think it's only right to give him the chance. You'd better write the letter this evening. I'll help you."

As a matter of fact, it took them a couple of evenings to agree upon a letter. The fifth, and final, draft was this:—

DEAR MR. ARTHUR HENRY SMITH,

Please do not think us interfering, but there is something which we think you ought to know, and perhaps you will thank us for telling you; but we prefer to remain anonymous.

We suppose you lost trace of the lady (Miss Angela Maidment) you were engaged to, before you were wrecked in the Cale-

donian, and believe that she is dead or has forgotten you; but this is not the case. She is quite alive, and very nice, and does not look very old considering her age, and she remembers you. She thinks that you were drowned, but she never means to marry anyone else; and she has your portrait (cut from an illustrated paper) and your smoker's cabinet in her drawing-room. You will see it (on the corner cupboard) if you should go there. She also keeps your cigarette-case (silver, with two chased figures in a doorway, and your initials cut upon it: A.H.S.). This is on a side table.

We have not told her that you were rescued, because we think that, if you ran away and let her think you were dead, it is better that she should never know, but keep the memory of a man who she thought was a good one, and fond of her. We think she is not very young to change to someone else now, as she might have, if she had known in time.

We do not think you can have known she was alive and have deliberately kept away from her; because, if you did, you would be a despicable scoundrel.

If it was a mistake, and you wish to go to her, the address is 8, Waterworks Road, Farmer's Hill. If you do not want to go, please take no notice of this; but we hope that your conscience (if any) will punish you.

From Two Well-Wishers.

P.S.—She is a dear lady, and kind to everybody, and has been faithful to your memory for sixteen years.

Jessica insisted upon the postscript "to touch his conscience" (if necessary). She said that perhaps Miss Maidment would rather that Arthur Henry went to her from remorse of conscience than not at all; "and she might find it some satisfaction to wipe the floor with him, if she didn't forgive him."

The next afternoon, Jessica made a call at No. 8. She told Miss Maidment that it was to bring a pot of mother's black-currant jam. She told herself that William would want to know if anything had happened. She saw no signs that anything had. Miss Maidment did not mention Arthur Henry. She talked chiefly about William and Jessica's affairs; advised her young visitor to get the table linen at a "white sale" in January; offered her assistance in making things for "the bottom drawer."

During the second cups of tea, however, the trim maid announced that a gentleman wished to speak to Miss Maidment. "He says his business is private, miss," the girl announced. "Name of Smith; quite respectable; very fidgety gentleman; keeps slapping himself with his gloves; excitable like!"

"I'll be going," Jessica said, and gulped down her tea. ("I was trembling so that I spilt some down my blouse," she confessed, when she told William. "I've pinned this chrysanthemum over the worst stain!")

"There's no need——" Miss Maidment began; but Jessica was nearly to the door as

the stranger burst in.

"Well, Angela!" he said. Miss Maidment shrieked. appears to have dignified it into an engagement. It wasn't, you know."

"I know," Miss Maidment gasped. "I know. . . . Do sit down. I must. . . ."

She sank into a chair; and Mr. Smith sat on the sofa; rubbed his hat round with his sleeve, and placed it on the floor.

"You returned the bracelet and brooch," he continued; "and you demanded your presents back. So I sent them. I had no idea that you were cherishing them." He nodded at the cigarette-case, and the cigar cabinet. "Or the memory of me. When you wrote you said that——"

"Never mind that," Miss Maidment en-



"'Well, Angela!' he said."

"Arthur Henry! You aren't drowned

"Then he made a step towards her; and I had the common decency to shut the door and run before he took her in his arms!" Jessica reported to the young gentleman to whom she always reported things.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Arthur Henry Smith stopped out of arm-reach of Miss Maidment, and stood mopping his forehead

with his handkerchief.

"Not drowned," he stated. "No. Picked up after two days in a boat. Thought you'd have seen it in the papers. . . . Of course, Angela, I had no idea that my death mattered to you. When you wrote to me and broke off our friendship—— Time

treated. "Surely to goodness we can bury the hatchet after all these years. My temper was up. I was young then. I don't suppose I meant half what I wrote."

"I see now that you didn't mean it," he admitted. He sighed. "Well, Angela. . . . Sixteen years are a long time. One alters. Life alters one. My life since we last met has been principally business; and golf; and billiards. My business has prospered. My handicap at golf is a gradually improving one, and at billiards I have three times made a break of a hundred. The highest—But the artificial interests with which I have filled the vacant place in my existence will not appeal to you. I mention them to make it clear at the outset that I have interests

which I could not entirely abandon. With this reservation-"

He paused; picked up the hat and gave it another brush with his sleeve.

"Whatever do you mean?" Miss Maidment cried.

"Well . . . I learnt this morning that, after sixteen years, you still cherish my memory. Naturally this raised kindly recollections of you. I did not propose the breach, although I assented to it, and . . . Well, Angela, I have never married."

Miss Maidment jumped upright in her

"Arthur Henry!" she screamed. "You don't tell me that you have come here to say you want to marry me?"

"I have come to offer to do it," Mr. Smith said, mopping his forehead, "if you want me to."

"But I don't," cried Miss Maidment,

aghast.

"Thank Heaven!" cried Mr. Smith. He gave his forehead a final rub, and stuffed the handkerchief in his pocket. "That's a weight off my mind."

"You're complimentary!" Miss Maid-

ment observed tartly.

"My dear Angela," Mr. Smith apologised, "you'd be all right to marry if I wanted to marry anyone. You keep your looks surprisingly; and your temper, I should judge! If I were the right man-someone who wanted a lively girl-'pon my word you look it—to lead him a devil of a dance, we'd be all right. But you know as well as I that we never could get through a week of evenings without your raising a breeze.'

"Me!" cried Miss Maidment. "It was you! You never wanted to do anything that we hadn't done before. You never

"Don't start it all over again," he implored.

"Then don't insinuate that I'd dream of marrying you," she said. "I shouldn't if you were the last man in the world!"

"Then," he inquired, "why the deuce did you treasure up these things of mine? Give out that you were tied to my memory and all that? Look at this letter, Angela!"

He handed over the letter signed "Two Well-Wishers."

Miss Maidment read the letter. "Oh!" "Oh!... Oh!... ejaculated. Oh! . . . It's from that silly girl who went out, as you came in; and the silly boy she's engaged to. They-they've misunderstood things."

"So it seems," he said. "I'm very glad to hear it; but how did they come to misunderstand them, Angela? Is the misunderstanding likely to be shared by other people? Has it got to be cleared up, or am I going to be considered a 'despicable scoundrel '? They've underlined it, Angela. You look. . . . Well, what have you got to say? . . . You aren't dumb, are you? You used not to be! . . . Why do you keep that cigar cabinet on that cupboard?"

He wagged his finger at it.

"The cupboard would look foolish bare,"

Miss Maidment explained nervously.

"The cabinet looks foolish on it," Mr. Smith observed. "Looks as if somebody was a fool; or a 'despicable scoundrel'. In italics, Angela; in italics. . . . Again, why is that cigarette-case— Why do women choose things like that? It wouldn't close if I filled both sides! Why is that on your table?"

"It's ornamental," said Miss Maidment. "It's there because a common leather thing is in your pocket. That was one of the reasons we quarrelled. You always found something wrong in everything that I did, or chose. You-

"Let's keep off that," Mr. Smith entreated. "There appears to be also a picture of methe thing they published at the time of the wreck-that you keep on show."

"Anybody," Miss Maidment claimed persuasively, "who knows anyone of notoriety

likes to claim the acquaintance."

"Acquaintance?" Mr. Smith commented. "Look here, Angela. You were always wonderful at beating about the bush. I've never met your equal at it. I'm a plain, straightforward man; prosaic, you called it. You answer one or two plain, straightforward prosaic questions. Have you been telling people that we were engaged when I went away? That I was the only man in the world to you? That you'd never marry anyone else? Have you been showing off these things as beloved relics of the man who was in honour bound to come back to you? Have you been doing this for the last sixteen years?"

"No," said Miss Maidment.

"Then," he proposed, "let us get the two Well-Wisher young jackanapes in here, and tell them that they are a pair of liars."

"I haven't been doing it for sixteen years," Miss Maidment explained; "only for five; since I came here. I've been a fool of course; but I don't call it manly of you to insist upon making me own it. You don't understand a woman; and you never did; and you never will. Men don't. . . . Or anything else properly! . . . Women don't either . . ."

"You haven't altered in your method of argument," Mr. Smith declared. "For Heaven's sake come to the point. Why did

you pass me off as your fiancé?"

"People," Miss Maidment explained, twisting her handkerchief to and fro, "look upon a woman who hasn't married as a remainder. It seemed to give me a sort of standing to call myself engaged. You can't be engaged unless you're engaged to somebody. Even you must see that! If you had been drowned it wouldn't have mattered to you. It wasn't my fault that you were picked up and that I didn't hear of it. I was in Switzerland, and missed the later papers. . . . If you're brute enough to make me say it any plainer . . ." She applied her pockethandkerchief to her eyes and nose. "You needn't grudge me a straw to catch at . . ."

"But," Mr. Smith complained, "I'm the straw; and you're drowning it. How about me? And my character? Dash it all, Angela. I may be a prosaic man as you called me in that letter, but I've a sentiment about my reputation as an upright prosaic man, and—hang it all !—a prosaic gentleman! Those confounded interfering young Well-Wishers will set it all over the place that I ran away from the nice, gentle, faithful girl-you little devil !--that I was engaged to, and left her to pine for me for sixteen years. It will get all over the city that I'm a 'despicable scoundrel'. Why, I'd rather marry you!" He got up and paced the "It may have to come to that!" he roared. "I'm hanged if I see any other way out! I suppose you'd take the house off my mind. That would be some compensation. Other men have put up with a wife. It would be no worse for me than for them. I'm not sure that it wouldn't be quite a good arrangement, if you'd behave yourself. . . . I suppose you wouldn't? You say you don't like being an old maid-"

"I didn't," Miss Maidment gasped. said I didn't like people saying I was. I'drather be one than be 'put up with'. have myself, indeed!"

"Then," he said, "the only thing for you to do is to send for those—those wellintentioned young idiots—and tell them the truth."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," she raged. "If you're such a brute that you want to humiliate me so that I can never look anyone

"I don't want to humiliate you," Mr. Smith denied. "I was a fool to suggest that you should tell them; but you must allow for my feelings. Certainly I shan't tell them, and give you away." He paced the

in the face again, you can tell them yourself."

room again. "Rather than do that," he said, "I'll go down to posterity as a 'despicable scoundrel'...in italics!"

groaned.

"You shan't do that," she screamed. "It's my fault. I must bear the consequences. I shall sell up everything and leave here. Then I'll write and tell them."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," he told her. "We must fake up some explanation. Suppose we said that your Arthur Henry was my cousin? Case of mistaken identity,

"Do you think there's the faintest chance

they'd believe it?" she cried.
"Er—no!... Well, suppose we stick to your yarn. We'll say that I couldn't trace you till I had that letter. Then I came and proposed to you, but you found that you didn't care for me now. could say I'd become too settled—was growing a pot—was too—er—prosaic. That's the thing to say; prosaic.

"Arthur Henry," she said impressively, "what would they think of me, if I changed for a few little personal alterations when the man who had been faithful to me for sixteen long years, came to me at last, and was faithful still when I—I know I'm nearly an ugly

old woman-"

"No, no," Mr. Smith protested. " You're

a long way from that.

"They don't think so," Miss Maidment said. She wiped her eyes. "They'd say that you had quite a good excuse for changing your mind."

"They'd say I was a 'despicable scoundrel'," Mr. Smith declared, "to look

at a few grey hairs, when-"

"Grey hairs!" Miss Maidment stormed.

"Why, I haven't any!"

"Then," he said, "I'd have no excuse at all. . . I've quite a lot of grey hairs, Angela. . . . Quite a lot. . . . Time's hand . . ."

He walked over to the window, stared out. Miss Maidment stood and stared at his

- "How old are you, Arthur Henry?" she asked.
 - "Forty-four," he stated.

"I'm thirty-eight," she remarked, twisting her handkerchief.

"You wear better," he said. "I suppose my prosaic life's aged me... Time flies... Pity, perhaps, that we were such quarrelsome young fools..."

"It wasn't altogether you," she murmured

shakily.

"Ah!" he said... "I suppose they are the Two Well-Wishers coming down the road... She's the girl, isn't she?"

Miss Maidment went and peeped over his

shoulder.

"Yes," she said. "They've passed her house.... They're going to look at the house at the corner of Morris Street. They want to take it, when the tenants go out.... They are so ridiculous. You should hear them talk of what they are going to do.... They go and stare at the outside every evening.... 'Our house.'... Don't look at me like that. A woman.... Now you see why I had to make up some

excuse, don't you? Don't blame them for that letter. They are just a happy boy and girl, who want other people to be happy too."

"It rather looks to me," said Mr. Smith, "as if they've forced us into it!... It feels like old times to be squabbling with you again.... Anyhow, I've never met any other woman that I felt I'd like to have at hand permanently to quarrel with."

"Haven't you? That's what you say.... Oh, Arthur, you mustn't.... Not right in front of the window then!... I've never met anyone I'd have pretended it about, except you.... How bristly you've grown!"

"Bristly and prosaic and a despicable scoundrel, eh? See what the two young

Well-Wishers have done for you!"

"Yes.... I must see what I can do for them; because I'm a well-wisher too!... Especially to you!"



THE GREEN SPACES OF THE WOOD.

THE salt wind is romping up the harbour, wild and free, With the leap and the toss and the tumble of the sea; The winds across the uplands they laugh in merry mood; But my heart it is with the green spaces of the wood!

The cherry-cups a-dangling over all those paths we knew,
And the tall hyacinth steeples with their belfries blue;
Cool primrose faces raised to where the ring-doves brood;
And the wind-flower babes a-dancing Ring o' Roses in the wood!

The kingcups in the dingle, and the woodruff white,

And the willows where a brown bird whispers secrets day and night—

Oh whence this magic lure whose spell none ever yet withstood?

And my heart it answers: "Here, in the green spaces of the wood!"

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

HOWMR.DUMPHRY INVESTIGATED **CRIME**

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LENDON

TR. ERNEST DUMPHRY, returning from his avocation rather earlier than usual, found his household somewhat excited.

"Been a burglary," called his young

daughter Queenie.

The law and the dictionary would not have called it burglary, but we all speak inaccurately.

"I've never known such a thing to happen in Tessel Road since we've been here," added Mrs. Dumphry, breathless. "In broad daylight too. The sheer impertinence of it. least fifty pounds' worth, they say."

"You telephoned for the police at once?"

asked Mr. Dumphry.

"Oh no! Why should we? glary wasn't here."

"I think you might have mentioned that before," said Ernest mildly. "You gave me quite a shock, talking in that way. Now do sit down, my dear, and tell me the whole thing quietly. First, where was the burglary ? ",

"Why, at the Pierce Eveleighs'," called

"It was your mother I was asking. But, however. And the second point is, what

Here Mrs. Dumphry broke in: "Such old friends of ours. It does seem rather inconsiderate, Ernest, don't you think? Poor Mouse is taking it splendidly, but she's lost such a lot of her pretty things. There was that lovely old watch of hers, with the enamel back—"

"With the green scriggly things on it," added Queenie hastily. "And the man must have been an expert, for he never took the pearls, though they were exactly like-"

"And four rings," continued Mrs. Dumphry, "including the one with 'Mizpah' on it which had been her aunt's."

Mr. Dumphry waited patiently till the rain of details ceased, and some of the main facts

emerged clearly from the mist.

That afternoon Mr. Pierce Eveleigh in his profession as an architect was over at the offices which were being erected for Borrowdale's. Mrs. Eveleigh was also out, having been bidden to a hen luncheon-party with bridge to follow. The cook was in the kitchen. The house-parlourer had obligingly run down to the far end of the garden to tell the gardener that gooseberries would be wanted. And the glass doors from Pierce Eveleigh's library into the garden stood wide open, as usual, the weather being mild.

These doors, being at the back of the house. were not visible from the road. But a curious person could enter from the road and walk round to the back of the house, and that was what the thief did. He entered the library, passed through into the hall, nipped up the stairs into Mrs. Eveleigh's room, and found his booty in the unlocked drawer of her dressing-table. He need not have been in the house for more than a couple of minutes.

He was seen by one person only, and that was the house-parlourer. She had but one swift glimpse of him, as he was leaving and she was returning from the gooseberry expedition.

"I saw him and I did not see him, if you understand me," she explained, "for he was round the corner and out of sight almost before I knew he was there, but I should say he was dressed darkish."

"Well," said Mr. Dumphry, when he had

heard the story, "all I can say is that this does not surprise me."

"Doesn't surprise you?" said his wife.

"No," said Ernest. "In looking into a problem of this kind the first thing to do is to place yourself in imagination in the position of the burglar. You have to realise what his thoughts would be. This burglar thought to himself: 'I will break into some house in Tessel Road.' "

"Why?" asked Queenie.

"Now, Queenie," said her mother, "please

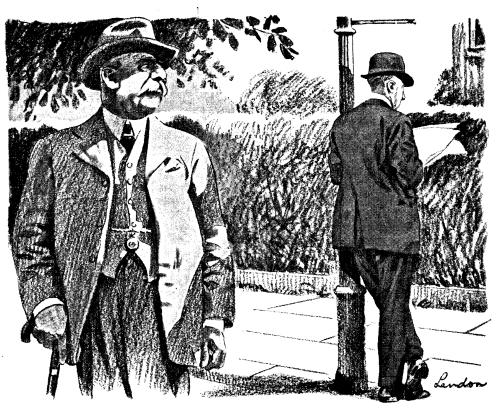
wears. The thing is obvious. Not only is it certain that if any house is burgled in Tessel Road it will be Pierce's, but it is certain that the burglary will be carried out precisely as it has been.'

"The way you seem to be able to reconstruct things is wonderful," said Mrs. Dumphry.

"Perfectly simple. I think it would be a friendly act if I just stepped across and saw

Pierce.

"I'm not sure," said Mrs. Dumphry.



Mr. Dumphry, wandering down Tessel Road, espied a young man leaning against a lamp-post. . . . He was reading a newspaper, but kept constantly looking up from it."

do not interrupt your father until he has finished." (The problem of how to interrupt a man who has stopped talking passed through Queenie's mind.)

"The burglar," Ernest continued, "then asks himself which house it is to be. Naturally he chooses Pierce Eveleigh's, as being the largest and most imposing and likely to offer the most loot. That being so, he keeps close observation on the house and its occupants perhaps for some weeks. He makes a note of Eveleigh's passion for open windows and of the jewellery that Mrs. Eveleigh "Mouse only left here five minutes before you came in, and she gave us to understand that Pierce was very much upset. He's almost more annoyed with the police than he is with the burglar."

"Well, Well, I can make allowances," said "Irritating thing to happen to Ernest. anybody."

Pierce Eveleigh was certainly very upset.

He was gaunt, grim, and terribly sarcastic.
"Insured?" he said, in reply to Ernest's kind inquiry. "Oh yes, we're insured.
Against fire. This is not a fire. Can you

tell me what we pay our iniquitous rates and taxes for? I've been here a good many years, and this is the first day I've seen a live policeman in Tessel Road. They might as well put a notice to burglars in the local paper, inviting them to Tessel Road and promising there will be no police interference. Mind you, there's enough of them when it's too late to do anything. I've had about half the force here this afternoon, one time and another, including a fat-headed fool in plain clothes who seemed to think he was some kind of detective. He wanted to examine my servants. 'Why?' I said. 'They've been here five years, and if they'd been dishonest I should have noticed it in that time.' That won't do for His Highness. He's going to try to get a better description out of Ellen of the man she saw. All she can tell him is what she told me-that the man was 'dressed darkish.' 'Hat or cap?' asks the genius. 'But I don't know whether he had a hap or a cat,' says Ellen, and goes into hysterics. So of course both the maids have given notice."

"And have the police found any clue?" "No. They're making inquiries. In six weeks' time they'll still be making inquiries. And that will be the end of it. Not one of them, from the top-boss to the common cop, has got the intelligence of a blow-fly."

"Do they think it's a chance theft or the

work of a regular professional?"

"I don't know. I didn't ask. What they think or don't think is of no importance to anybody. What's quite clear to my mind is that if you live in Tessel Road you needn't expect any protection from the policewe've got to look after ourselves."

Thus unintentionally did Pierce Eveleigh, speaking inaccurately, without wisdom, and in a very bad temper, sow the desire to be a sleuth in the warmly receptive and dangerously fertile mind of Mr. Ernest Dumphry.

"Presumably," said Mr. Dumphry, his brow indicating deep thought, "presumably

the thief used the front staircase."

"Seeing that he would have had to walk through the kitchen, where the cook was, to get to the other--very presumably."

Ernest asked a few more equally pertinent questions, renewed his condolences, and went home with his mind much occupied. was a problem-could he solve it?

At dinner his wife asked what he made

of it.

"Well, I was called in too late."

"Called in? You weren't exactly called in. Ernest, were you?"

"That," Ernest admitted, "is in a sense But Pierce has no confidence in the local police, and he seemed to me rather to imply that he would like my assistance. What I meant is that a crowd of policemen had already been all over the place, and they may unwittingly have destroyed clues which I should have found useful. Still, I have made a few observations and notes. After dinner I shall see what can be done with them. Possibly nothing," he added humbly. "However, don't let me be disturbed while I am working in the library."

"Oh, we shan't disturb you. We shall be

dancing in the studio, you know."
Mr. Dumphry had forgotten that, and looked rather wistful. He had taken to dancing somewhat late in life, but he had become very fond of it.

"Well," he said, "I might be able to come over to the studio later. I will if I can."

In the library Ernest began methodically by taking the different persons in Pierce Eveleigh's household, and putting down in writing the case, if any, against them. Thus he began with Mrs. Eveleigh as follows:

"Eveleigh, Emma. Also known 'Mouse.' Rather frivolous Plays bridge. Incurs large debt of honour. Afraid to tell husband. So sells part of her jewellery, and arranges bogus burglary to

cover its disappearance." But brilliant and convincing though this theory looked at first, it had to be abandoned. To say that Mrs. Eveleigh played bridge somewhat flattered her game. She did play what she believed to be bridge, but she played it about once a fortnight in her own circle for points that never exceeded sixpence a hundred. That seemed to dispose of the "large debt of honour." Also, although Ernest had known Pierce to be definitely afraid of Mouse, he had never known Mouse to be in the faintest degree afraid of her Brilliant but a wash-out. husband.

He tore the sheet from the writing-block and carefully destroyed it. He was about to begin on his second theory when through the open window from the studio came the sound of piano and violin. The violin indicated that a married daughter of Mr. Dumphry's had arrived, as she not infrequently did, with her husband. Good tune. Very catching. Mr. Dumphry, holding an imaginary partner, gyrated three times round the library table before it suddenly dawned on him that this was not conduct befitting the head of the Criminal Investigation Department.

He returned to meditation and his writingblock. The second theory he formed was more elaborate. He wrote it as follows:

"Conspiracy between Cook and Gardener. Suspicious points are (1) Orders to Gardener usually given in morning. Why gooseberries forgotten? (2) Why does not Cook go herself to ask gooseberries, instead of sending Ellen? (3) Gooseberry bushes being out of sight of library entrance to garden, presumably library entrance out of sight of gooseberry bushes.

"What happens then is that gooseberries are intentionally forgotten. Ellen is sent for them in order to get her out of the way and out of sight of garden entrance to library. Cook then gives sign that all is clear to thief waiting in road by tapping window or some such. Gardener detains Ellen but not quite

long enough. Hence glimpse."

Ernest read this through carefully. Good, but not quite perfect. There were holes in it. The cook had a reputation for honesty many years long. She was known to be on the worst possible terms with the gardener, as the cook generally is. Also, why did she tap at the window when it would have been so much simpler to push it open two inches at the bottom and hand out a small parcel of jewellery already prepared by her?

Still, Mr. Dumphry felt he had done as much as criminal investigation could expect of him for one night. Besides, it would be unkind not to go over to the studio to see his son-in-law and his daughter Elsa. Very catchy tune, that. Wonderful rhythm.

As a rule these almost impromptu and quite informal dances stopped at ten o'clock. To-night, with the connivance—and even at the direct instigation—of Mr. Dumphry himself, they danced till after eleven, and then proceeded to raid the house for light refreshments. Mr. Dumphry was very popular that night. On the subject of his investigations he was reticent; said that some rather promising lines had opened up but it would be premature to say more at the moment.

During the next two days Mr. Pierce Eveleigh, who had no faith in the police, inquired of them diligently and frequently what results they had obtained. Mr. Dumphry continued his theories but perhaps with a diminished enthusiasm, and on the night of the second day another burglary took place in Tessel Road.

This time the burglary was at "Myosotis," the residence of the Wilkinsons. The burglar's prize was very small, for he was

interrupted. Mr. Dumphry was annoyed, for he did not know the Wilkinsons—had made a special point of not knowing them—and in consequence he was in no position to call in at "Myosotis" and pursue his investigation. Thus, he had no doubt, he missed many valuable clues. Mrs. Dumphry said that if these things did have to be it was at any rate more satisfactory that they should happen at night as being far more what one expected. Mr. Pierce Eveleigh became quiet, amused, and more deadly bitter than ever.

"I am writing to *The Times* about this," he told Ernest. "It will be quite a temperate letter, but I rather think it will bring about some drastic changes in our local

police force."

Possibly it might have done if the letter had ever appeared. It ran to six bitter typewritten pages and definitely libelled by name about half a dozen people of local prominence, and even then *The Times* did not print it.

And then on a Saturday afternoon it chanced that Mr. Dumphry, wandering down Tessel Road, espied a young man leaning against a lamp-post. The young man wore a darkish suit. He was reading a newspaper, but kept constantly looking up from it. As Mr. Dumphry passed him, the young man gave a whistle—obviously a signal of some kind. Mr. Dumphry was much impressed.

When he returned home he said to his

wife:

"As a result of observations I have made, it seems to me definitely certain that there will be a third burglary in Tessel Road tonight. If there is not it will simply mean that something has happened to prevent it. Say nothing about it to Queenie. I don't want to make her nervous."

As a matter of fact, Queenie was not a nervous young lady. As for the burglary, something must have happened to prevent it. It did not take place. For several evenings in succession Mr. Dumphry would leave the house and patrol Tessel Road in search of suspicious circumstances. He found none. On each occasion Tessel Road seemed to be looking very much as usual.

"It's rather hard lines," he said to his wife. "Had we but known the Wilkinsons, had I but been able to call there and put the questions which occurred to me—questions which apparently have not been put by the police at all—I have very little doubt that by this time I should have been able to put my hand on the thief. As it is, you must see for your-

self that I am working under tremendous disadvantages."

"Tremendous," said the docile Mrs.

Dumphry.

When the next Saturday came round it suddenly occurred to Mr. Dumphry in the afternoon that he might go out and see if that young man in the darkish suit was still loitering about the place. Not having his latchkey with him, and expecting to be back in a minute or two, he pulled the front door to behind him, but did not actually shut it.

And there was the man—the same young man, in the same darkish suit, leaning against the same lamp-post, making the same pretence of reading a newspaper. Mr. Dumphry's heart leapt with joy—the joy of the sleuth who feels that he is at last penetrating the heart of the mystery. Had there been a relicence in eight there is no doubt that

Mr. Dumphry decided to walk slowly on to the end of the road and back. If he met a policeman, he would instruct him. If not, he would return and telephone the policestation.

He met no policeman. As he was returning he noticed some way ahead of him the young man still in situ. And then suddenly things happened. The young man folded his paper hurriedly, thrust it into his pocket, flicked a little cigarette-ash from his coat, and straightened himself up. At the same time a brightly dressed young person emerged from the tradesman's entrance to "Stratford" on the other side of the road, drawing



"A little further on a second policeman mixed himself up with the man and they both fell to the earth together."

Mr. Dumphry would have asked him to detain the young man on the ground of suspicious loitering. But there was no policeman. on her gloves. They met in the middle of the road, where the young man gave her a perfectly good kiss, and they walked off together, she clinging affectionately to his arm.

And Mr. Dumphry realised the cold, pungent, and quite unsatisfactory truth that he had merely witnessed a customary assignation between the maid from "Stratford" and her young man on the occasion of her Saturday afternoon off.

Mr. Dumphry was not quite at his sunniest when he reached his house. He found the door shut, and this annoyed him further, for he had to ring. Probably West, the

house-parlourmaid, had shut that door.

"Always officious,"
said Mr. Dumphry
savagely under his
breath.

The door was opened to him immediately by West, and just behind him was Mrs. Dumphry in what might

"The first policeman and Queenic arriving shortly afterwards, blown but triumphant."

I am. There is such a thing as foresight.

"We may not have lost the money value,"

Have you 'phoned the police?"

have been described as a highly emotional condition.

"Oh dear me, Ernest!" she cried. "Such a dreadful thing has happened. The thief has been here."

"Impossible," said Mr. Dumphry. "I've scarcely been out of the house five minutes."

"I know. Those were the five. Either somebody left the front door ajar, or the man had a skeleton key."

This gave Mr. Dumphry rather a nasty jab in the conscience, but he pulled himself together.

"An ordinary front door," he said judicially, "presents no difficulty to the professed burglar. What has the man taken?"

"We're not sure yet. There's a lot of table-silver from the dining-room, and your presentation umbrella, with the gold band round it, from the hall. He must have been very quick indeed."

"We've lost nothing," said Mr. Dumphry proudly. "Pierce Eveleigh was not insured.

said Mrs. Dumphry. "But the image of a thief—a man whom we don't even know personally—standing calmly there in my dining-room, will haunt me for months. And West feels just the same, don't you?"

"Yessum, indeed," said the obedient West.

"I was asking," said Mr. Dumphry—still calm, mark you—" if you had 'phoned the police."

"Well, no. Naturally not. We waited, of course, to see what you would advise."

"It seems," said Mr. Dumphry, a little pained perhaps but not angry, "as if all women lose their heads in a crisis. I will go to the telephone at once."

But he never did. At that moment the front bell rang furiously twice, and this was followed immediately by a curious syncopated knock which was the special prerogative of Queenie.

Queenie entered in such a state of excitement that she was unable to remain still or to speak. As she waltzed round the table she sang the following:

"Oh, joy!
Oh, bliss!
We've caught the dirty dog,
We've caught the thief."

Regarded as vers libre, nothing could have been better. But it did not satisfy Mr.

Dumphry.

"Control yourself, Queenie," he said. "Please control yourself. What has happened? What do you mean by we?"

"Me and the two policemen."

But the rest of her story may be told perhaps in a slightly less incoherent form than that in which she delivered it.

She was returning from lunch with her married sister Elsa. As she approached the house she saw a small man with a brown bag and an umbrella that was too tall for him emerge from the front door. This struck Queenie at once. The gas and the water always used the back door. The small elderly man looked up and down the road once or twice. Queenie bent down, undid a shoelace, and proceeded laboriously and slowly to do it up again. When the man left the house she followed him. He walked quickly, but she could recognise the presentation umbrella. So when he got into the main road she shouted to the policeman: "Stop thief! Stop that man!"

The man began to run. The policeman did his best, missed him, and blew his whistle. A little further on a second policeman mixed

himself up with the man and they both fell to the earth together, the first policeman and Queenie arriving shortly afterwards. blown but triumphant. The brown bag. when opened, proved very incriminatory.

"And," said Queenie, "will you go down to the police-station to identify the stuff.

or shall they send it up here?"

"I will go down," said Mr. Dumphry. may add that I think that on the whole you acted sensibly. You did exactly what I should have done."

Some months afterwards Mr. Biggs told Mr. Dumphry that he really felt rather anxious—there had been so many burglaries in his neighbourhood lately.

"What you've got to do," said Mr. Dumphry, "is to remember that a thief or burglar is just a human being like yourself. We had a burglary epidemic in my part of the world. Everybody was arranging special burglar alarms and seeing that all the windows and doors were shut and locked. What I did was to go out and leave the door ajar. The burglar came in as I knew he would and-let's see, to-day's the twentyfirst, isn't it ?—he's doing time now."



PENALBANACH.

PLACE where sheep with silver wool go by, And in the glory of the sunset light The grass and rocks are softened pink and bright. A place where silence hears the sea-gulls fly With beat of swishing wings and plaintive cry, And sometimes fairy islands catch our sight, Elusive as the wind on a hushed night, And lovely as the stars in a still sky. Place of black storms, sheer clefts, and white, white foam, Of hills untrodden in their loneliness . . . Of rain and rabbits . . . and to make it home A fire of peat . . . and a child's kiss to bless . . . And, on mysterious open seas afar The poignant beauty of a lighthouse star.



AT THE FULL MOON

By WALLACE B. NICHOLS

Author of "Secret Market"

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

HE clear, shimmering light of morning drenched, penetrated and permeated the undisturbed lagoon and the palm-haunted sickle of its sandy shores. Not the barest wisp of a cloud flecked the deep and impenetrable blue of that stainless Southern sky; and the hot breath that came in softly from over the brazen sea scarcely held enough strength to stir the wandering tress that peeped from under the white, large-brimmed hat which she wore to protect her golden head from the searching rays of the sun.

She stood motionless, stiffly but daintily erect, with the pallor of a great, an infinite, anger upon her beautiful face. She looked at her companion from head to foot, remorselessly contemptuous. He was dressed

as he always was, in the hideous, and even ludicrous, finery of shells and shark-teeth obligatory to the high priest of a South Seas native idol. For all that, he was an Englishman, a man of her own race, of her own caste. She shuddered instinctively as her glance rested for a moment—for she quickly looked away—upon the two skulls slung from his girdle, one at either hip.

"I think it is disgraceful of you, Mr. Stevenage, and too utterly disgusting!"

The girl's voice, clear and scornful, rang out under the tall, dusty trees. Then, abruptly, she turned to leave him. Stevenage, apparently unmoved by her outburst, watched her lazily from where he stood, one foot, cased in tawdry sandals whose latchets were crudely embroidered with shells, set

upon the stump of a palm that had been felled. He let her go a dozen paces and then called after her:

"All men have their price, Miss Newenden."

She stayed her steps, doubtfully, hesitating to look back: they had argued the matter for so long and so uselessly.

"Even I."

It was the surprise of finding, for once, no mockery in his tones but, instead, a strange, half-wistful quality, that decided her to listen to him all over again. She swung round on her heel.

"Well?" she asked.

He strode towards her.

"Marry me," he said.

Incredulously she looked at him.

"Mr. Stevenage, really!" she began with

a haughty lift of her chin.

"I will do "Wait," he interrupted. what you want, I will do everything, if you will marry me. You may not believe me, but it is true: I fell in love with you when you landed here, at my first sight of you. Account it unto me for righteousness, Miss Newenden, that until now I have kept silent. If I respect nothing else in the visible, or the invisible, world, I have respected your feelings. But the time has come when-when we can strike a bargain. You owe me something. Any time these three months, a word from me, and your life, and your brother's life, had not been worth a couple of mouldy cocoa-nuts. With a mere snap of my fingers I could have wiped out that Mission Hut of yours as easily as I could smear a figure off a child's slate. And you know it."

She did know it. She had often puzzled over it. But she knew the wherefore now, and grew suddenly afraid. It was as though a cold wind blew over the lagoon from she

knew not where.

"Look here," he went on, "I'm dead serious. I know I'm a rotter. I know I probably deserve all you have said to me, all you have thought of me, all you could possibly say or think. To you, I'm the blackest of black sheep, and, which is even worse in your serious, young, lovely eyes, I have sinned, and am still sinning, against what you call the Light. But have you ever cared to work it out for yourself from my point of view? As so many good women, you can tolerate a sinner but not sympathise with him. And how can you hope to influence his life in the smallest degree unless in some way you are possessed

of an instinctive understanding of his attitude to life? The sinner has an attitude to life just as the saint has; even if not commendable, it is usually sincere, however warped it may seem. You have to reckon with everybody's attitude to life, Miss Newenden. It is the only true basis of whatever individuality people may have. But it needs a wider knowledge of human beings than you—or your brother too, for that matter—have, up to the present, shown me."

She cried out at that, but he paid no heed to her tempestuous little flurry of words, and kept his gaze fixed on the far shore of the lagoon, waiting calmly for her ineffective wave of anger to be spent.

"You have heard my story," he went on, deliberately throwing his voice into her first pause as he might have thrown a pebble into the unmoved water before them. "But have you ever seen the matter from the point of view of a man who doesn't believe in your religion, nor in any religion? To you, I'm a blasphemer, an unclean renegade against civilisation and Christianity. But I never was a true product of what you call civilisation, and never had a religion. How, then, can I be a renegade against what I never once in my life really upheld?"

She did not answer. This was a new Martin Stevenage and one she had never suspected his unkempt and barbaric ex-

terior of harbouring.

"When I was wrecked here," he continued, "and was by way of being sacrificedwith torture in the process, I may add-by these semi-cannibals to their painted image, naturally I played for my life for all I was worth, using every gift I possessed to save my skin-and I had gifts peculiarly suited to influencing the native mind, such as ventriloquism and conjuring. Did I tell you that I was a member of a tenth-rate concert-party bound for Australia when the boat we were on went down-with me, so far as I know, the only survivor? worked on their fear and superstition, and when, by a lucky accident, I found out that my being washed ashore here had coincided with the sudden death of their idol's high priest, I had an inspiration that not only saved my miserable body but also made me a power in the land-in time, the chief power.'

His voice, as he spoke the last words, took on a deeper resonance, and his head lifted proudly. There was something Cæsaresque about his face, but it was the face of a Cæsar who was ever three parts rogue to

one part genius.

"I admit I did it by sheer cleverness at tricks. But isn't all success in ruling men due to a cleverness in trickery? You needn't trouble to deny it," he added sarcastically. "I have already discounted your knowledge of life."

Joyce Newenden flamed in her soul, but

said nothing.

"The whole thing," went on Stevenage, "ended by interesting me. We all become interested in a job that we can do well. I was in the limelight—only I suppose I ought to be more literal and call it torchlight !—and playing to continual applause. Yes, applause is just the right word, for what were obedience and homage and fear of me but applause in the truest sense? Anyway, it is a show with a permanent run, and I'm playing lead. Besides, it is a lazy life; I get everything for nothingwhich is different to what happens in your boasted civilisation."

He grinned at her sardonically.

"And then you and your missionary brother came here, and both of you ever since have been working to convert these islanders to your creed, working to draw them from me, to sap my one hold on life and safety-and power. Do you wonder that I've fought against your influence? If once you succeed in loosening their belief in the potency of my magic and in the all-powerfulness of that painted image of mine, what do you think will become of me? They will turn and rend me-and to be rent by savages is not a pleasant experience. I've nearly had some!"

"On the contrary, Mr. Stevenage, you would be quite safe. If we did convert them you would be among a Christian people."

There was a light in her eyes as she spoke,

the light of faith and conviction.

Stevenage stared at her. She actually believed it! He wanted to laugh. though a girl fresh from a training-college

could understand his savages!

"As a white man, Mr. Stevenage, it is not only a duty, it is mere common decency for you to side with us against these barbarous and terrible practices that you—you, an Englishman!—actually control. It is too disgusting for words!"

Stevenage's jaws snapped.

"We've finished with that," he said. "The argument has been switched on to another line, Miss Newenden. I asked you to marry me. Do so, and I'll smash my idol to matchwood, and turn to converting the heathen. Those are my terms; take them or leave them. And I warn you: we've a sort of feast on in the tribe to-night —it is the full moon. If I like to play upon their superstitious frenzy for my own purposes, what is there to prevent me?"

"Probably nothing, Mr. Stevenage—not

even your self-respect!"

She spoke with a cold contemptuousness that deceived him, for inwardly she was sick with fear. He had it in his power to do such terrible, such unspeakable things, and she could see no joint in his armour. Not even his love for her could be played upon; it was a love—if, indeed, his feeling could be called by that divine word-in which there was no tenderness, no selfsacrifice, no magnanimity.

He withered her scorn by a sarcastic

compliment.

"Anger suits you, Joyce."

She loathed him all the more for that use of her baptismal name. He savoured her loathing appreciably, as though he had an actual relish for it; then he suddenly rasped out a direct and final question.

'Well, will you, or won't you, marry me?" Silently she held out her left hand so that he could see the engagement ring upon it.

"Oh, I've seen that before. A parson friend of your brother's in England, isn't he? Well, England is a long way off."

She looked at him steadily, hoping that he would not see how near she was to trembling, and then, without a single word, turned away towards the little corrugated Mission Hut that gleamed in the sunlight at the next curve of the lagoon.

II.

ALL the rest of that day Joyce Newenden shouldered her burden of fear in silence, going about her manifold daily tasks with her accustomed poise and outward serenity. But in the evening, after the conclusion of the simple Mission Service, which had been attended by a strangely restless, and still more strangely diminished, congregation of barely a dozen natives, and when she was sitting with her brother at the close of their frugal supper, she told of her interview in the morning with Martin Stevenage.

"I thought something was amiss," he said, drawing thoughtfully at his pipe.

"How?" she asked, and gave a little weary smile. "I didn't think I had given anything away."

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of you, Joyce. I was thinking of our congregation. Not many came, and those who did come were—to put it mildly—in a state of absolute terror. Didn't you notice it?"

"Now you speak of it, I did. But, at the time, I was too occupied with my own problem—and my own prayers—to notice any outside happenings otherwise than subconsciously."

Newenden nodded.

"I felt their terror all about me; it was a sort of hovering psychological cloud," he murmured. "I said to myself: 'This is Stevenage's doing.' They are evidently afraid of what may happen at the great tribal feast to-night. As Christians they are not obliged to attend, but I guess Stevenage has been threatening them—and one does not wipe out generations of superstition as one can wipe out chalk on a blackboard. He has frightened them pretty thoroughly, and they are evidently scared to death."

He smoked for a while in silence.

"Well, we can't do anything," he said. "I am afraid we are in his power."

"No, nothing," she answered, and smiled wanly. "We just have to wait and see what he does. I fancy he'll do it pretty soon now."

She rose and went to the doorway and looked out. Night, as always in the tropics, had fallen swiftly, and the scene was dark and breathless. The moon had

not yet risen, but the stars were already fiercely glittering in the purple of the vast sky. The water of the lagoon shone faintly, like a pearl, and one of the visible planets was mirrored in its deep tranquillity. Further on, heaped darkly along the dark skyline in the distance, lay the Mountain of Devils, the ancestral meeting-place of the tribe. Already a red fire could be seen flickering far off, too far to be distinct but near enough to be apprehended for what it was. Joyce

shuddered and turned back into the room. She went to her brother and stood behind him where he sat, laying her hands upon his two shoulders.

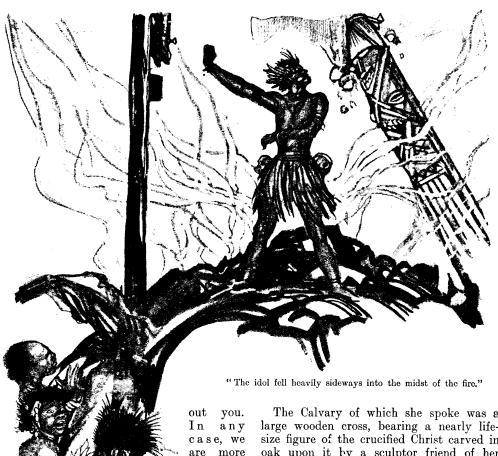
"I am afraid I have been more of a hindrance than a helper, John," she said. "If I had not come with you, then Stevenage would never have seen me, and nothing of all this would have happened. If he hadn't—had me—to fall in love with—he might more easily have tolerated your teaching. As it is—oh, I don't know, but I feel more ashamed than afraid. . . . I have given him a loophole for the wilful exercise of his abominable power."

Newenden rose and put an arm about his sister.

"That is nonsense, my dear. You have

done good work with me, and I





God's

than Ste-

vena ge's.

Let us

both re-

in hands

member that and be thankful." His words steadied her, and the tear that had been slowly dropping down her hot cheek was the only one that fell. She went again to the doorway and looked out. In the face of such beauty, how could man, she wondered, be so hideous. The sagas of the poets and the disillusions of the prophets surged together within her blood,

and she seemed one with the very yearning

of the whole earth itself toward the eternally

unattainable. Suddenly she gave a cry.

"John! John!" she called.

Newenden stepped over to her. "What is it?" he asked.

"The Calvary!" she said, and pointed. "It has been taken away. Look!"

The Calvary of which she spoke was a large wooden cross, bearing a nearly lifesize figure of the crucified Christ carved in oak upon it by a sculptor friend of her brother, which they had brought out with them from England and had erected upon a small knoll outside the little corrugatediron Mission Church which they had built close to their own dwelling.

Newenden whistled.

"Stevenage again!" he said in a low "I wonder what he can want with it. He evidently has some devil's trick up his sleeve. Sometimes I'm tempted to the unchristian wish to put a bullet through his heart. If he makes any attack on you, my dear, I shall consider myself justified in doing it too. Perhaps it would be as well to have my revolver in my pocket in case he comes. I'll go and get it."

III.

But he never did get it. As he turned to fulfil his intention a dozen or so natives, in war panoply, armed with spears and clubs, descended suddenly upon the Mission Hut and dexterously secured both brother and sister. Bound, but not gagged, the two of them were marched swiftly inland towards the Mountain of Devils. After about half an hour's journey they began to hear, far off, the incessant beating of tom-toms and, as they approached nearer, the weird drone of primitive chanting. Soon the great tribal fire could be plainly discerned ahead of them. A gradual and easy ascent led to the stunted plateau where it blazed. This plateau served as the eastern lip of the crater mouth of an unfathomable and subterranean lake which existed in the mountain's heart. Here they found the whole tribe assembled, squatting before a rocky eminence that towered above the yawning vent of that extinct volcano. Upon this eminence leaped and soared the huge fire, and witch-dancers in its tawny glare were performing strange and barbaric evolutions, screaming their hideous ritual above the din of the beaten tom-toms and the low, sibilant chanting.

Joyce looked about her for Stevenage, but could not see him. There was only the towering, horrible idol he served, seven feet of crudely carved, and more crudely painted, wood in the semblance of a revengeful demon, perched on the rock close to the fire, which illuminated all its clawed frightfulness.

"He is not here," she whispered to her

brother.

"Not yet," he whispered back. "But he is sure to be here soon; it is his show,

depend upon it."

Their guards had halted them in the shadow of a boulder and stood around them, silent and motionless, precluding even the remotest chance of any escape. They had evidently received very strict and careful commands from someone who knew how to exact, or possibly compel, the most rigid obedience.

After a period which, to the prisoners, seemed interminable, a sudden hush fell over the whole assembly; only the hiss and crackling of the fire, high above them, were to be heard. Then into the silence came a voice, as though from the sky.

"One of his ventriloquial effects," mut-

tered Newenden.

"Bow ye down to the coming of the moon!" cried the voice.

At the words the whole assembly, save for Newenden and his sister and their motionless guards, with a long, wailing chant fell forward upon their faces. Looking downwards the girl saw, a little to the right, between two boulders of rock, the full moon just clear of the far horizon, gleaming luminously over the quiet sea. When she looked upwards again toward the fire she saw that Stevenage, in all his abominable

apparel, with the flames shining here and there on the smooth bone of the skulls at his girdle, was standing sharply silhouetted against the fierce blaze. Then she caught sight of what he was holding up in his grasp. It was the wooden Calvary from outside the Mission Hut. At once the wailing chant ceased, and all eyes were fixed upon the horrible, yet quite magnificent, figure of Stevenage.

He steadied the Calvary and set it firmly in a hollow fissure of the rock, so that it kept upright of itself. Then he faced the assembly with his back to the fire, which cast his barbaric shadow distortedly across the intervening space. He stood between the two images: that of Christ upon the Cross on his right, and on his left that of the

awful idol.

After a pause, during which he looked straight at his captives, Stevenage began to speak. He used the native tongue, but that was quite well understood by the young missionary and his sister, who listened intently and with growing feelings of angry

apprehension.

"O children," began Stevenage, "long has the peace of your god been troubled by the two servants of another God whom they have borne hither across the great seas from their own land—a strange God and one not as yours. Behold now, children, these two gods face to face, here at my right hand and here at my left. At the command of your god, whose priest I am, familiar with his counsels and holding his wrath in my hands, I have bidden you unto a feast that ye may decide in your hearts as to which god henceforth ye shall follow and obey."

A murmur ran swiftly through the prostrate savages, as swiftly as a flame in a light

wind will run through dry corn.

Stevenage lifted his hand. Silence fell, and he spoke again. His voice, though his life had hoarsened it, still retained some of the resonance of the born actor's.

"Peace, O my children, and hearken unto my words. I have brought hither by my powerful magic these two gods to hold a palaver together, and ye shall hear all that shall pass between them. And I tell you that one shall prevail mightily against the other, and him shall ye serve all the while that ye live, but the other ye shall see cringe in his great shame and fall into the fire and be utterly consumed away until he has turned again unto the nothing that he is!" "He is clever!" whispered Newenden to his sister. "Of course, he has the game in his own hands."

"Hush! He is speaking again."

He was, but it did not appear so to the natives. They thought it was their god who spoke, and they listened, awed and wonder-It may have been a tenth-rate concert-party to which Stevenage had once belonged, but he himself, at all events, was a first-rate ventriloquist. As though out of the idol's mouth there came a flood of scathing invective—to two of the listeners it was invective of a horrible blasphemy-against the sorrowful, thorn-crowned Figure on the Cross, invective to which, in the rhetorical pauses in which reply was sedulously and mockingly invited, there was, of course, no answer. The natives seized every point. Stevenage, as Newenden had said, was clever. He played upon his audience with the skill of a magnificent orator; he worked them up into a frenzy of excitement in which anything could be possible.

"Look upon Him," burst forth from the idol, "look upon the pale tortured One who thinks Himself a God and yet cannot save Himself from the torture—even as He cannot now save Himself from me. Watch! I am the powerful one, the mighty lord of the thunder that terrifies you, because it is my voice. Behold how my magic shall make this God from over the water to fall into the great fire and to burn away until nothing is left but a handful of charred wood. Behold!"

The voice ceased. To Joyce Newenden the tension was so terrible as to be almost hypnotic. Her eyes, as though she were at a play and gazing spellbound at the stage, were fastened upon the picture before her. And what a wonderful picture it made!—the high rock, with the Calvary upon it, and the grotesque and painted idol; between them, the hideously garbed Stevenage; and, casting its red light over everything, the huge fire with its high-leaping flames; while, as a foreground, yawned the black, forbidding gulf of the crater.

As in a trance she gazed upon Stevenage, wondering—and dreading—what was to come next. With that unconscious, or subconscious, power which is akin to telepathy, and is perhaps telepathy in an undeveloped form, her eyes drew his. For a long moment the two looked at one another, the light of the fire playing upon the faces of them both. He paused in some act unknown, and stood quite motionless, as

though carved in ruddy marble, the firelight dancing about him in mazy flickerings. Unable to bear his intent gaze any longer, and her nerves suddenly giving under the strain, the girl flung her arms about her brother's neck and began to sob convulsively.

Memory is at the root of most revolutions; sometimes it is individual memory, sometimes mass-memory, sometimes it is race-consciousness. But so complicated in its processes is even the simplest example of cause and effect that it is utterly impossible to assess accurately and completely the various interplayings in any revolution, whether in a whole people or in one man. At best can only be indicated some salient feature in the intimate line of events.

It was a note, a timbre so to speak, of peculiarity in the girl's sobbing that brought a picture into the mind of Stevenage, a picture that he had forgotten for more years than he would willingly have counted. He saw a girl of sixteen, his own sister, lying, stricken miserably of spinal trouble, in a white bed, with the coverlet heaped with honeysuckle. The window was open, and he remembered the sound of a sweeping scythe in the garden below. He could hear it still, and once more there came into his mind the thought that had come into it then: the thought of how symbolic was the sweep of that scythe in the garden, keeping time with the silent sweeping of the invisible scythe in the room. The girl had suddenly caught the honeysuckle in her feverish hands and crushed it against her drawn face, breathing its scent fiercely, hungrily, despairingly, and then had broken into sobbing. He could hear it still. When he shut his eyes it was as though he had retraced his steps through the ways of time and was again beside that white bed. listening to that sobbing.

"Oh, Ella, Ella . . ." he murmured, and covered his face with his hands.

For a long moment nothing was heard but the roar of the great fire on the rock and the sobbing of Joyce. Then Stevenage spoke again, and this time the words came as though from the Figure upon the Cross.

Newenden's arm tightened about his sister, and gradually her sobbing grew hushed as they listened spellbound and almost unbelievingly to what Stevenage was saying in a strange, sweet voice, all the stranger and all the sweeter because of its contrast not only with the voice in which he had spoken as the idol, but with his own habitual and hoarser tone.

"It is not for me, O people, to speak as

speaks your god; my message—as those who brought me hither over the seas have told unto you—is not of anger, nor vengeance, but of peace and of love. From farther away than the stars I have seen you and have come to you, and my message is with my messengers whom ye know. Hearken unto them, and learn my bidding and obey, and it will be well with you for ever and for ever. And I, too, have my magic: behold it, and, having beheld, know my power and worship me."

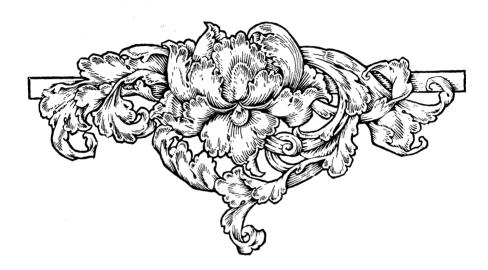
What was it that gleamed red upon Stevenage's cheek? Was it a tear, lit up by the

fire?

How it happened neither Newenden nor his sister ever knew, but suddenly, and as though giving vent to a terrified scream, the idol fell heavily sideways into the midst of the fire. A rush of sparkles burst into the night, scattering up against the stars, and the dry, painted wood of the idol itself broke swiftly, consumingly, into white flame.

For an instant the eyes of Joyce and Stevenage met once more; then, with a cry as of despair and anguish, Stevenage flung his arms high above his head and plunged down through the abyss of the crater into the unfathomable and subterranean lake below.

Newenden and his sister, released by willing hands, rushed forward to find themselves the centre of an awestruck nation of savages who were beating the breast and arising imploring hands to the Christ.



INVOCATION.

STAY for a little, June so fleet,
That hast a rose in hand,
And spurn not yet with jocund feet
The rich, rose-bearing land.

Stay, for I fear the Autumn cloud, And leaves that wane and fall— O maiden June, that art so proud, Fickle and prodigal!

Stay, for I love thy dawn, thy noon,
Thy midnight, and thy sweep
Of planets, and thy cool gold moon
In sultry heavens asleep.

ERIC CHILMAN.



"There he met Lucienne-and the mischief was done."

BELPHEGOR

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

"DO not believe it," cried Mademoiselle du Chesnay le Gobineau. "It is unbelievable."

"Unbelievable," echoed Mademoiselle

Marie-Thérèse dutifully.

"Belphegor to fly away. Belphegor to leave us of his own free will. After all these years. Absurd!"

"Altogether absurd," agreed her sister.

Mademoiselle du Chesnay tapped the table beside which she stood with the tip of a long forefinger. "I am convinced; I am perfectly convinced that that odious

man Lèchenard is at the bottom of it," she said with conviction.

"I believe you are right," said her sister

no less certainly.

"You remember that, not a month since, he declared in the hearing of M. le Curé and of others deserving of belief, who would no doubt testify to it if necessary, that he would like to wring Belphegor's neck."

"Simply because the poor innocent expressed in his hearing sentiments which——"

"Which his ears are as unworthy of

hearing as his brain of understanding. I have no doubt about it, no doubt at all. Ah, Lucienne, you bring us news?"

Lucienne shook her head despondently as the door of the boudoir closed behind her. "Alas!" she sighed. "He is neither in the orchard nor the vineyard. I have searched everywhere, calling to him. Had he been within sound of my voice, he would certainly have come." Tears rose into her big eyes, though they did not fall. "It is terrible. It is to despair. Poor Belphegor."

There was a mournful silence for a time as they gazed disconsolately at the deserted perch, its base heaped with the cracked nut-shells from Belphegor's last meal, the broken chain that had secured his leg, the open window. "We shall never see him again," sighed Mademoiselle Marie-Thérèse.

"But yes, Mademoiselle," cried Lucienne with an attempt at hopefulness. "He will return. Certainly he will return. A bird so wise, so faithful. Be sure that he will not desert those whom he loves so well."

"You will never see him again," said Mademoiselle du Chesnay with the firmness due to her seniority. "By this time he is certainly dead, probably eaten."

"Eaten," cried her sister with a little scream.

"Eaten, I say. That fellow, that vaurien, that Lèchenard—having stolen Belphegor, out of his wicked malice—what more likely than that he should devour him? What else indeed could one expect from a man professing such opinions?"

"M. le Maire!" cried Lucienne in her turn. "M. le Maire steal Belphegor—and devour him. Oh no, Mademoiselle—it is

impossible."

"Nevertheless, I know what I know," persisted Mademoiselle du Chesnay, shaking her head wisely. "It now remains only

to punish."

"But, Mademoiselle, it is impossible. There was no time. Not five minutes before I was here, in the room, talking to Belphegor. I——"

"And was the window open?"

"No—no—it was shut indeed. But even

"And you believe that Belphegor himself opened it, to effect his escape?" Even in her distress Mademoiselle du Chesnay smiled, almost grimly. "He is, it is true, of an intelligence almost human, but that — No, it is without possible doubt that the man Lèchenard is responsible.

Remains only to bring home the crime to him."

To realise the heroic self-control of Mademoiselle du Chesnay—it is true that her younger sister was cast in a less Roman mould-you must understand the value of Belphegor. And to understand the value of Belphegor you must know that he was once the intimate friend of Marie Antoinette, in the days when that unhappy Queen still held sway in Versailles. at least was an article of faith to the Mesdemoiselles du Chesnay, and if you valued their friendship you were wise to accept it without question. In so doing you must also, of course, accept his age as nearing a century and a half. But that were less difficult, for, as Mademoiselle du Chesnay could prove to you, with a wealth of scientific reference, from M. de Buffon onwards. parrots—and especially grey African parrots with pink tails—have been known to live for periods almost unbelievable. Mademoiselle du Chesnay had indeed, during the fifteen years of Belphegor's sojourn in the Château Tison-la-Tour, accumulated a whole library of books bearing on the subject and knew them almost by heart, to the exclusion of all others save her Book of Hours. All this quite apart from the testimony of her adored nephew, Enseignede-Vaisseau Charles Le Gobineau. He it was who had presented Belphegor, on his return from one of his voyages, with a detailed account of how he had obtained the venerable bird from the last descendant of the Assistant-Keeper of the Queen's Aviary, in whose family he had flourished ever since the break-up of the Monarchy. Had anyone dared to suggest that Enseignede-Vaisseau Charles, who later died gloriously for France in the Great War, was capable of inventing such a history or even of deviating in the slightest degree from the strict letter of the truth on any subject whatever, Mademoiselle du Chesnay le Gobineau would certainly have known how to deal with him well and faithfully.

So you may suppose that when doubt was no longer possible, when it was all too evident that, willy or nilly, Belphegor had left his snug perch in the sunniest corner of Mademoiselle du Chesnay's boudoir and passed out into the cold, unfriendly world, there was desolation in the Château of Tison-la-Tour, desolation that echoed far and wide throughout the Commune of Tison, and even beyond. For Mademoiselle du Chesnay, moved to hitherto undreamt-of

enterprise by her loss, went so far as to insert an advertisement in the columns of the Eclaireur de Biort, offering no less a sum than one hundred francs—very much more than she could afford-for news of the wanderer, and an enterprising reporter of that respectable journal, scenting a story, hastened to interview the sorrowing sisters and evoked a "scare-head" article which created no small stir. In it he detailed the whole history of Belphegor, his youthful days at Court, his respectable middle age with the Assistant-Keeper's descendants, his profound love of Francethe Eclaireur is the organ of the Legitimist party in Biort-his verbal repertoire, including such patriotic phrases as "Vive le Roi," "Down with the Left," "Salute M. le Curé," or "Hail the White Banner." He hinted darkly at machinations, at dark plots hatched by creatures in human form but otherwise lower than the beasts that perish. Never, he concluded, had fowl so wise or virtuous honoured with its existence the Departement of the Bièvres and the sacrilegious wretch-if such there were—who had dared lav hands upon so much as one of his tail-feathers must expect a sorry fate in this world and an eternity of remorse in the next.

From a campaign so energetic immediate results might reasonably be expected. Such was unhappily not the case; hope of reward and fear of punishment seemed alike unavailing. The boys of Tison scoured every bush and hedgerow for miles around; the Cercle Sportif of Biort organised a battue-with unloaded guns for fear of a regrettable incident; Mademoiselle du Chesnay increased the promised reward to two hundred and fifty francs-a fortune almost inconceivable; M. le Curé himself urged upon the faithful the duty of helping assuage the grief of those saintly women Mesdemoiselles du Chesnay, but all to no avail. The slow hours passed; three days elapsed and still there came no news of the missing centenarian.

Meanwhile the position of M. Lèchenard, Maire of the Commune of Tison, grew always more uncomfortable. The Commune of Tison, you must know, comprises the village of Tison-la-Tour, the hamlet of Tison-le-Hameau and the two outlying farms of Quatre-Vents and La Vacherie. Tison-la-Tour, as the most important centre, is the seat of government, and in Tison-la-Tour accordingly is the Mairie. It faces upon the Place—the little cobbled square

lined with pollarded elms, which is the business-centre of the village. It is a little two-storied white-faced house, distinguishable only from its neighbours by the magic words, "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," inscribed upon its façade and the official flag-pole jutting from the upper story. Immediately beside it an iron gate gives upon an avenue of stunted elms that lead —in fifty yards or so—to what is left of the ancient fortalice that gives its name to the village. Tower, indeed, there is no longer. and of other tokens to departed glories only a few crumbling buttresses, amid which stands the modern building, a square, yellow-faced house, flanked by two slated tourelles, the whole no larger than many a suburban villa. Behind it stretches a range of outbuildings, the most prominent a high-flung grenier, or barn, that gives it added importance to the casual eve. but they were leased to a neighbouring farmer by the two impoverished maiden ladies who were the last collateral descendants of the feudal du Chesnays.

Thus it was that the windows of the château overlooked the little back-garden of the Mairie, which had indeed been cut out of what was formerly the park, while a wooden gate in the dividing wall seemed to show that the Mairie was at one time a dependency, perhaps an entrance-lodge of the larger and older building. It was to this unhappy disposition of affairs that M. le Maire owed much of the undeserved suspicion which was to cling to him.

Before his assumption of office M. Lèchenard—then known as Père Lèchenard, for official rank is a brevet of gentility in the Deux-Bièvres—was a happy man. addition to a snug business which included such varied "rayons," as they say in Paris, as saddlery and wagon-building, cornchandlery and upholstery, he farmed a hundred acres or so, half of it his own land; he had a profitable little vineyard on the hillside above the village; he had an equable disposition which made him generally popular, and he had one son who was the centre of all his hopes and ambitions. In an evil hour, his popularity and his paternity combined to drive him into that public life which was to cause him such discomfiture.

However it may be elsewhere, in the Departement of the Deux-Bièvres political opinions are less a matter of belief than of circumstance. The Mesdemoiselles du Chesnay and their like are Legitimists, dévotes,

contemners of all new things, simply because it is inconceivable that they could be anything else. The Maire of the Commune of Tison partook of the opinions of the Prefect of the Deux-Bièvres, for one thing because it was inconceivable that he should not, for another because, in such an incredible contingency, he would very soon cease to be Maire of Tison. At the time

in the eyes of the Mesdemoiselles du Chesnay. As one result he lost their custom—it is true it was not very lucrative—as another—but that is what this story is about.

M. Lèchenard continued to live in his own house, at the farther end of the Place beside the Church, but his working hours were spent in the Mairie, and it was doubtless owing to its contiguity to the home of



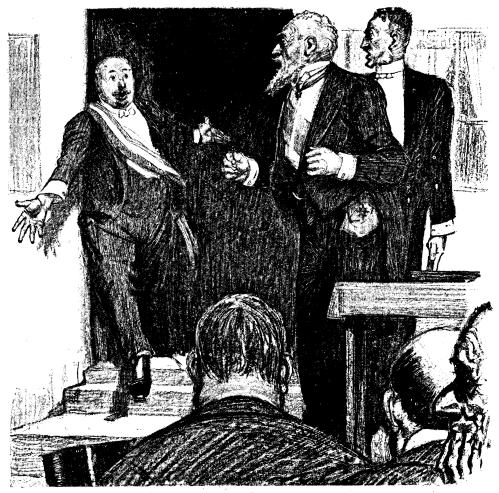
"Men stared at each other, shrugged their shoulders, wondered if they had heard aright."

Père Lèchenard became Maire of Tison the Government of the Republic inclined very much towards the Left. So, accordingly, did the Prefect of the Departement, and so inevitably did the Maire of the Commune. Accordingly M. Lèchenard, who had hitherto been regarded as little more than a Latitudinarian, political, religious and what not, became at once a very stern upholder of Progress, and, thereby, a very bugbear

Belphegor that, almost immediately after the disappearance of that venerable fowl, very disagreeable rumours began to circulate among the gossips. That their Maire was, ordinarily speaking, as honest a man as any inhabitant of rural France can afford to be, not the sharpest-tongued matron of Tison-la-Tour would have cared to hint. But, in the matter of Belphegor, circumstances were peculiar. For one thing, M. le Maire was known to cherish a grievance against that intimate of Marie Antoinette—had publicly declared that a bird trained to express sentiments so subversive of good order were better destroyed. For another, it was very well known to the gossips that he spoke thus not only as magistrate, but as father.

Because Tison-la-Tour is a village of

the high wages induced by labour-shortage in the industrial districts, had induced the young men, followed somewhat later by the young women, to desert their ancestral fields for the iron-works of the Nièvre, the textile mills of the North or, above all, the ever-present appeal of Paris, as compelling a lure to the French peasant as ever was London to the British in the days



"M. le Sous-Préfet turned furiously towards the source of the interruption. . . The white shirt-front of M. Lechenard gleamed in the sunlight, though no whiter than his face, as he rushed forward. 'M. le Sous-Préfet,' he cried. 'It is not I. It is not...i is.....'"

post-war France it is inhabited almost entirely by old people and young children. Although, as the war-monument opposite the Mairie testifies, Tison did its duty ungrudgingly during the War, the scarcity of young men is only indirectly due to it. Rather it is that the thrilling memory of the years of conflict, contrasted with the dullness of village life and buttressed upon

when its streets were hypothetically paved with gold.

M. Lèchenard's son was no exception to the rule, though as it happened he left his home very much against his will and in obedience only to parental commands. And his banishment was due, as his father could never forget, to Belphegor and Belphegor alone. Almost the last commission

executed by M. Lèchenard for the Mesdemoiselles du Chesnay, before his declared opinions closed the account for good and all, was the provision of a new perch, stand and leg-chain for Belphegor, and as the Fates unkindly willed, Jules Lèchenard it was who, in his father's absence, conveyed it, when completed, to the château. There he met Lucienne-and the mischief was True that, as soon as he realised it, the Maire exiled the foolish youth, putting him in the charge of his cousin Alphonse, who was a metal-worker in Biort; true that he specifically forbade him ever to think of or speak to Lucienne again under penalty of his lasting displeasure, but—M. Lèchenard had once been young himself and had few illusions as to his son's probable course of action.

That the Maire's prompt action was justified few in Tison would have denied. For although Lucienne was undeniably a nice girl, bien elévée as one could desire in a daughter-in-law and a pretty girl to boot, although from the domestic point of view she would make an admirable wife and even, it might be, bring some kind of a dot with her, having at least one uncle who was in comfortable circumstances, she suffered, in M. Lèchenard's eyes, under two crushing disabilities. Firstly, she was a "foreigner." Not only did she come from another village, but from another department altogether, that of the Loireet-Adour, from a commune a good twenty miles beyond the Loire indeed, from a family which might be well enough in its way but of which no one in Tison-la-Tour knew anything at all. That was bad enough; very much worse was it that she quite openly partook of the detestable opinions of her employers, who in fact treated her rather as a companion, and above all a pet, than as a This was natural enough, seeing that she was the daughter of an old family retainer; natural also that she should share their beliefs, held by her mother before her; unfortunately, with the rash zeal of youth, she flaunted those opinions with a frankness which made her altogether impossible regarded as daughter-in-law to the Maire of Tison-la-Tour. Figure to yourself that, on January 21—the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVIshe would publicly appear in mourning, taking care to explain to all and sundry her reason therefor; that on October 16, that of Marie Antoinette's death, she draped the perch of Belphegor with black crêpe-

and then imagine to yourself what sort of a wife she would make for the son of M. Lèchenard, banner-bearer of Progress in the Commune of Tison-la-Tour. —on the day that the anxious father, after much searching of heart, forced himself to call upon her at the château, to entreat. if not command her, to renounce his innocent boy—did she not receive him in the very boudoir of Mademoiselle du Chesnay, a very museum of Royalist relics, and, for all reply to the appeals of the anxious father, make some secret sign-M. Lèchenard was ready to swear to this -to that outrageous perroquet which immediately burst into a very torrent of blasphemy—"Vive le Roi!" "A bas la Republique!" and what not—so that it was impossible for a mere human voice to make itself heard. Then it was that M. Lèchenard delivered himself of his ulti-"When the Mairie of Tison-lamatum. Tour becomes the home of Reactionaries; when through those halls dedicated to Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, shall be heard to echo the appeal to a fallen despotism voiced by that ignoble fowl-then, Mademoiselle—and not till then, will I, Jean Brutus Lèchenard, give my consent to your marriage with my innocent son."

That these were his exact words we have the evidence of M. le Maire himself to prove. for, being it maybe, pleased with the perfection of their periods, he quoted them more than once that day, both in the Council Chamber and subsequently in the Café of the Triumphs of the Plough, at apéritiftime, as Madame Leguay-Desmoulins, the amiable patronne, would testify, if asked. There also it was that he declared that, in his opinion, it were a patriot's deed to wring Belphegor's neck at the first opportunity. So now you can readily understand why, within twelve hours of the disappearance of Belphegor, it was universally believed, irrespective of political predilections, that M. le Maire was himself responsible and had very possibly not only kidnapped the unhappy Belphegor, but eaten him, cooked en casserole, into the bargain. And the congregation next day -which happened to be Sunday-at the Paroisse, to hear what M. le Curé would have to say about it, was unprecedented.

Private cares, however compelling, must always, in the official world, give way before public duties. It happened that the Monday following Belphegor's disappearance was that set aside by a benevolent Government for the distribution of honours gained during the preceding three months by worthy inhabitants of the Commune of Tison. The mothers of four "numerous families"-ranging from nine to eleven —were to be decorated with the Legion of Honour; three agriculturists who had remained for an average of thirty years in the same employ were to receive the Order of Agricultural Merit; M. Moreau, the schoolmaster of the Commune, was to be made an Officer of Public Instruction. M. le Sous-Préfet of the Departement was to officiate, supported by the Senators of the Departement, several local Deputies and the full force of the Communal officialdom. The ceremony was to take place on the threshold of the Mairie—that building being too small to contain the company which was expected, and M. le Maire, as representing Communal authority, was to welcome the distinguished guests. So you may suppose that, between supervising the proper decoration of the Place, arranging the programme of his subordinates and, in the intervals, rehearing his own speech, M. Lèchenard had little leisure to remember either the charge hanging over his own head or the undutiful affections of his son.

The weather was perfect, the decorations more than adequate, M. le Sous-Préfet at his most amiable, the attendance, both in numbers and demeanour, all that could be desired. M. le Maire, standing upon the front door-step of the Mairie, surveying the crowded Place, felt that he was indeed the central point of an historical occasion, and, moved by the applause of his fellowcitizens, delivered his speech of welcome with a verve and eloquence universally admired. Amid universal applause stepped back into the shadow of the entrance hall, making way for the orator of the occasion. Nor was the great man lacking. It is true that his speech was the same which he invariably delivered on such occasions and dealt rather with the glories of France and the perfection of her system of government than with the immediate circumstances; but the people of Tison are not over-critical, and the genial manner of M. le Sous-Préfet, his comfortable figure and his resonant voice, combined to convince his hearers that they were listening to a very pearl of oratory.

Everything indeed was going as well as could possibly have been expected; the Sous-Préfet's secretary, standing beside him with the medals and ribbons exhibited

upon a velvet cushion, was already fingering them in readiness for the first presentation, when there came a most unfortunate interruption. The orator was just coming to his penultimate period—the secretary knew it by heart, having indeed originally composed it. It referred to our beloved France, frank and loyal, which, based unalterably upon the adamantine rock of Republican institutions, had victoriously overthrown the embattled legions of immemorial despotisms. Even as the words rang out like a clarion-call, from behind him, somewhere within the Mairie came a hoarse, raucous counter-cry, "Vive le Roi!"

The orator, appalled, hesitated and stopped, the words, "the Republic, one and indivisible," dying upon his lips. Again there rang out the hoarse challenge, "Long live the King!"

There was a long moment of silence, while men stared at each other, shrugged their shoulders, wondered if they had heard aright. M. le Sous-Préfet, recovering his presence of mind, was beginning his sentence again. But he was not allowed to finish it. From within the Mairie rang out a very torrent of what, in the circumstances, was no less than rank blasphemy. "Long live the King!" came the harsh voice, yet so clearly that not an ear in the little Place but was aware of its every syllable. "Long live the King! Down with the Republic! Down with the Left! Down with the Government! Up with the White Banner! Long live M. the Curé! Long live the Church! Down with the Republic! Long live the King—the King—the King!"

M. le Sous-Préfet turned furiously towards the source of the interruption. "M. le Maire," he cried into the darkness. "This is an infamy. This is a dirtiness. Never would I have believed that a servant of the Republic, who has bound himself——"

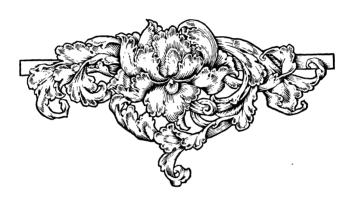
The white shirt-front of M. Lèchenard gleamed in the sunlight, though no whiter than his face, as he rushed forward. "M. le Sous-Préfet," he cried. "It is not I. It is not—it is——" Unmeaning words rushed from his lips; he made an anguished gesture and fell forward. M. le Maire had fainted.

Lucienne makes the most adorable of wives. I should not like to be the man who denied it in her husband's presence, and even Père Lèchenard—he has resigned his political ambitions long since and with them the prefix of gentility—even Père Lèchenard has not a word to say against it nowadays.

For a time indeed he cherished a grievance. even though he could not go back upon his word, that word which he had pledged, in the presence of many witnesses, not only in the Mairie itself but in the Café of the Triumphs of the Plough. whole of Tison-la-Tour agreed, to an accompaniment of tempestuous laughter, about that; he had pledged his word, that word he must keep. Keep it he did, as the better alternative, and even, having laid aside his official sternness with his office and become again the latitudinarian of vore, consented to the marriage taking place in the Paroisse with his official enemy, M. le Curé, officiating, and the Mesdemoiselles du Chesnay le Gobineau taking a prominent part in the proceedings. Made-

moiselle du Chesnay was indeed her protegée's severest critic, for it was very doubtful, she considered—and Mademoiselle Marie Thérèse agreed with her—whether even the passion of love—which is, as we know, a sacred thing—could justify Lucienne in carrying off Belphegor and keeping him concealed for three days in a draughty upper-room in the Mairie, where he might so easily have taken cold, merely for the gratifying of her matrimonial ambitions. Fortunately Belphegor suffered not at all and bids fair indeed to outlive his adoring fellow-loyalists.

As to Père Lèchenard, the time is long gone past when he would hear a word against Lucienne. She is, after all, the most charming of daughters-in-law.



MEMORIES.

Some things, I think, we always shall remember When you are famous, and we both are old:
A gusty night of clouds in late September;
The dark; the lamp-flecked distance; and the gold

Of sudden kisses, warm beneath the pall Of isolating dusk; a moonlit hour When your words mingled with a fountain's fall Of singing drops. It was our secret bower,

That ghostly court. Did not our happy love
Rise with the gleaming water to the moon,
As silvery mist curled round us from above?
O thousand breathless moments gone too soon!—

These are the things that never will be told
When you are famous, and we both are old.
ELEANOR RENARD.

THE REVERIE

B_v F. DUDLEY HOYS

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

HE gas-light was fickle, throwing a few pale yellow rays across the table. Beyond these, shadows drew a kindly veil over the poverty of the room. Time had a voice here, in the shape of a loud-ticking alarm clock. The hissing of the gas-mantle supplied an obbligato.

At the table, Neville pored over a sheet of music. Now and again he sighed, turning his head and drinking tea from a cup that might have withstood a sledge-hammer. Not that its coarseness troubled him. He was examining Strelsi's "Serenata," and it claimed all his attention.

"It'll want practice," he told himself. "Lots and lots of practice. But I can do it

iustice."

His dark eyes glimmered with an almost purple sheen. The thin, white face flushed with pleasure. He ran slim fingers through his hair and peered more closely at the music. Crouching like this, angular and intent, he resembled some curious character from Dickens, for the dim light had a distorting, old-fashioned effect.

He was only twenty, but Life had added ten years to his expression. Since fifteen he had been working to keep himself. wages as a clerk at the Yarrowfield cotton mills made mere existence a fight. that the fact that he leathed his work, and his appearance of premature age may be understood.

The one consolation was his violin. He found more glory in it than any young mother in her first-born. It was his soul imprisoned. From the day his parents died and left him destitute, he turned to the violin and sanctified it. It became his confessor, his patron, his lover. He told it everything, and under a passionate bow the violin answered.

Mrs. Heap, his ample landlady, had suggested once that he should play in a picture palace. He'd make two or three pounds a week that way, he would, instead of slogging along on twenty-five shillings, earned by dreary scribbling at the mills.

"Eh, laad, why not?" she concluded. For the moment he had wanted to strike Only for the moment. Then he had laughed and felt sorry for her ignorance. How could she understand the pride of genius

that scorned such sacrilege?

So her well-meaning idea fell on sterile ground, and he continued at the mills. He did his work with a certain mechanical accuracy, because he was grateful. owner of the mills, a boyhood friend of his father, had given him the job for memory's sake. But his heart was with the violin, and his dream a concert platform where genius might play only the music that is worthy of genius.

That dream remained a hopeless yearning until Strelsi made his offer to Yarrowfield. It was the town of his first triumph—very different from the great capitals that now paid tribute to his magic violin. But he remembered what Yarrowfield had done for him, and the outcome was typical of his nature. He announced that he would give an audition to all those violinists in the town who sought a career. One would be chosen. trained free, and set on the road that leads

Here was the answer to Neville's prayers. His chance had come.

Two pieces were to be played at the audition—Strelsi's "Serenata," and another of the competitor's choice. For this, Neville had decided on something of his own, an unwritten "Reverie" his violin had come to whisper when regrets were dominant.

Then fate, in the form of Mrs. Heap, raised a further obstacle to success. landlady's married daughter came to live with her, bringing a bundle of clothes that squalled its opinion freely. According to Mrs. Heap, Neville's playing disturbed the baby. He must give up practising in her house.

Argument was useless. To every plea he put forward she answered: "Nothing of the t'all." This was mixed, but conclusive. He found himself pondering over other lodgings, and shook his head. Mrs. Heap's charges were low, and a penny to him had a definite significance. He might hire a musicroom. Here again, poverty made grim refusal.

He solved the problem by resorting to Yarrowfield Common and playing in the open air. It was cold and exposed. But at least he had the world to himself, silent and listening. The only enemy was rain.

To-night he finished his tea, took up a cheap candle-lantern, and tucked the violin case under his arm with loving care. Then he went out into the darkness, for the usual lonely joy of playing to the sky.

It was cold and still. A slight frost made the air gleam, gave a ghostly shimmer to the leaves of evergreens, and held the barren trees as stiff as toys. Now and then a twig cracked, with the sharpness of a pistol-shot. Winter's abdication was reluctant.

A yellowish haze hung over Yarrowfield. Factory chimneys and street lights combined to defy the night. Up here, on the common, the world was blind. Scrub-oak and elm, silver birch and plane, dogwood and hawthorn—all these were merged into the indefinite. Only on the low ridge to the east was there a patch of brightness, where Neville's lantern shone. He had tied it to the wall of his music-room—a small clump of silver birches, with a space in the centre. Their slim, festal trunks seemed to incline and listen as he took out his violin.

His fingers were chill, but he scarcely noticed it. The warm, throbbing enthusiasm of youth ignored discomfort. With a drawing-pin he fixed the sheet of music against a silver birch, and began to play.

Strelsi's "Serenata" told of moonlight, turquoise seas, of fragrance in gardens and soft laughter among the shadows. As he played, he saw the moon's path across the water, and playing, he walked up it. While the music lasted, the phantasy was true. He went on up the path, gazing ahead at lilac surf, a long rich shore and a shining town. He never reached it, because a string snapped, and he was back on the common, with the frost and the tall, solemn trees.

The dark eyes closed. The phantasy could not be recaptured. He laughed and took out a new string.

out a new string.

"Quite pretty," he decided, putting away
the "Serenata." "But he shouldn't play it
before ordinary audiences. People who pay
a guinea for a seat must be well fed and contented. And how can they imagine much

beauty? You have to be cold and hungry and disappointed to picture Nirvana. When reality offers nothing, you're more likely to help your imagination."

He applied some rosin, tightened his bow

and drew it across the strings.

"Now for the 'Reverie.'" An affectionate, wistful smile crossed his face. "Suppose it's a bit sad. But that ought not to make any difference to the judges. Besides, it contrasts well with the 'Serenata.'"

This time he saw a long, wide plain with hills at the end. The grass was rustling gently. Here and there, deep pools where slow cattle drank. The sun went down behind the hills. The afterglow was sad, a pale green, dying light that sighed as it faded. Came a creeping haze, like a summer cloud drifting through shadow. The wind whispered, and there was no colour. A soft hymn lamented through the plain.

All the vague longings of his soul found voice. All the dumb yearnings of humanity spoke through his violin. He went on until he grew afraid of his own playing, and

stopped suddenly.

It was then he saw the eyes, two pinpoints of fire, staring at him through the bracken.

He blinked, expecting to dispel the sight. The magic of the "Reverie" still lingered.

The eyes remained. They were of a blueorange colour, and very luminous. Keeping quite still, he stared into the shadow, and found that the watcher was a fox.

"Pleased to see you, Reynard. Glad you appreciate decent music. Come again to-

morrow.'

At the sound of the voice, the eyes had disappeared. Neville heard a gentle rustle as the fox stole away. He laughed and blew into his cold hands.

"That's the sort of critic I like—a dumb one. I can see us getting along splendidly together."

He put out the lantern, picked up his case and went back to mundane Yarrowfield.

Next practice night the fox reappeared. It seemed that the violin was a sort of Orphean lute. At the end of a week the Vixen trusted him enough to approach within stroking distance. The queer friendship ripened. Finally, Neville was introduced to the family.

Behind his airy music-room was a low knoll, cunningly concealed, where the Vixen had chosen a snug holt. It was dry and warm, and it housed three cubs, three balls of silk that rolled and sprawled and chattered.

young,

mouths.

bushy tail straight and tense. The red-

brown body hugged the ground, hiding that

betraying whiteness of her under-parts that might give warning to sharp eyes.

For herself, she might have been content with a bat, or even a few frogs. But only

epicurean diet was worthy of the cubs-a

rabbit or a pheasant—sweet feeding for

eager

The Vixen licked them all over, her eyes bright with pride. She even allowed Neville to stroke them—a tremendous concession from careful motherhood. Later, when he brought pieces of bread and meat, she let him lift the cubs out of the holt and feed them. He became, in fact, a sort of godfather—to take the place, perhaps, of their own parent who had met his end suddenly while plundering a hen-roost.

So she disdained The Vixen poked her head out of the holt, the easier victims sniffed the air, and looked pleased. There was not much light. A few remote stars pricked the velvet of the sky. The moon had taken a holiday. The shadowed earth "It was then he saw the eyes, two pin points of fire, staring at him through the bracken.'

offered every assistance to piracy.

She turned back, licked her cubs thoroughly, and muzzled them as if in admonition to be good. Huddled together, their fluffy heads touching, they were soon fast asleep. Satisfied, she crept out across the common, bent on replenishing the larder.

Her advance was silent. Not a twig cracked under her swift paws. She passed over the sodden leaves like a shadow, her and stole on. The myriad fairy voices of the wild folk wove into the silence, without breaking the hush. They were the breathing of night.

Once she passed a stoat, tawny, flatheaded, murderous. He stared, hissed softly, and rippled away. Of his tribe she was most afraid. They dared not attack her. The vixen was a match for any three of them. But there were the unguarded cubs—— Deep in the obscurity of her

animal brain lay a memory. A stoat had scented out her former holt and waited for the mother to leave the defenceless children. She had returned just in time, slaying the marauder. That night she transferred the cubs to the holt on the common, carrying one at a time, a total journey of fifteen miles.

That memory disturbed her now. She increased her pace, anxious to be back.

She reached a beech copse on the north side of the common, wormed in amongst the undergrowth, and stopped dead. Ahead, on a branch about eight feet up, roosted a pheasant, some foolish, straying bird from a local covert.

An easy prey, and a baffling line of attack. Nothing could cross that carpet of beech leaves without raising a rustle; enough to bring the wild, yelping alarm note of a blackbird, that supper-cheating sentinel of the wilds.

Her eyes flickered. She turned her head from side to side, saw a ragged hawthorn hedge, and took it as a lucky chance. It led almost up to the tree where the pheasant slept.

Easily as a squirrel, she crossed the hedge in a furtive glide. Then she crouched, leapt and struck. One frightful, rattling splutter the pheasant gave. After that, silence.

With the bulky victim hanging from her jaws, she sped off through the copse. Her object attained, she was no longer wary. Pattering paws drummed lightly over the crisp turf, and the wind that raced by blew odd golden feathers from the drooping pheasant.

She passed a wire fence, separating a footpath from a heavily wooded enclosure. In a heap of leaves ahead doom waited.

There was a loud snap. She fell back, jerking convulsively. The dead pheasant dropped from her jaws and rolled into a gully.

Struggling desperately she tried to rise. Savage iron teeth gripped her hind paws—held her fast.

held her fast.

When dawn came she was still fighting against hopeless odds, and up in the holt three balls of silk whimpered pitifully.

The fateful Saturday had arrived. At two o'clock the audition was to begin at the Town Hall. Neville's name was some way down the list. A notice from Strelsi's secretary asked him to be present at three.

The mills closed at midday. He rushed

back to his lodgings, made a hurried meal, and hurried away to the common. He would have time for a half-hour's practice before the vital test.

Excitement and nervousness were telling on him. His eyes were burning. His hands trembled as he took out the violin and began to tune up. He had banked so much on this one chance, spurred on his hopes with such feverish optimism, that success had become a premature reality. Now, with the audition imminent, he felt awed. In a very little while he would know his fate, and at this thought his heart pounded madly.

Calming himself by an effort, he started to play. The common was deserted. Few crossed it in winter, even during the day. The only signs of life were in the centre, where the main road ran through to Yarrow-field.

As always, the silver birches that surrounded him seemed to listen. The wind made them nod slightly, as if in time with the music. Soon he had forgotten his nervousness and was deep in the "Serenata."

He came to the muted passage, where the violin dwindled to a whisper. Above the faint music he heard persistent, whimpering noises. They brought him back to earth, and with a sigh of annoyance he dropped his bow and listened. The cubs were crying.

He was surprised in a casual way. He had never heard them whimpering together, like this. Sometimes, during feeding, one would complain with a treble squeak because another had taken his share. But this prolonged lamentation was something new.

"Suppose Mrs. Reynard's overdue with the dinner," he thought, and resumed

playing.

The cubs continued to wail. At length, half annoyed, half amused, he walked across to the holt and found the litter in a state of utter misery.

No man can console a trio of starving fox-cubs by mere stroking. After several attempts, he stood up and shook his head helplessly.

"Cheer up, you funny little things. You'll soon—" He broke off abruptly, hearing a curious sound. It was like a human sob.

He saw something coming very slowly toward him through the bracken. It moved a few inches at a time, breathing and gasping heavily. Each movement, a stumbling, forward wriggle, was grotesque.

"Oh, my God!" he said suddenly, and

ran across to the thing that laboured and moaned. It was Mrs. Reynard, dying.

Somehow, after hours of struggle, she had uprooted the pin that held the trap. With her hind paws still in its merciless grip, she had crawled and jerked and dragged herself away, her one thought to reach the cubs. The trap was heavy, and wounds had weakened her. Every movement had been agony, every inch a yard. Perhaps she had heard the violin and found strength for one last effort that might carry her to the holt.

Stirred nearly to tears, Neville bent down and released the trap. The Vixen drew up one torn leg; the other was broken. Vainly she strove to rise, her jaws dripping, her throat working queerly. It was useless. She slipped back and lay there, her glazing eyes turned to the holt in a wistful, hopeless stare.

Neville forgot the audition. He forgot everything save those forlorn cubs and the piteous eyes of their mother. He ran at top speed across the common towards the nearest house, a half-mile away. Surely they would have brandy there and surely they would be human enough to give him some when they heard the reason?

Five minutes later he secured a little. Second thoughts had warned him not to mention a fox. They might say: "Well, kill it, then, and put it out of its pain." So he explained that it was for an injured dog, and gave one shilling to the hardheaded servant who answered the door. Near by, at a little cottage boasting the title "Cyclists' Rest," he bought some bread and a bottle of milk.

With these he hurried back. He was calmer now and the audition claimed his thoughts. To get there in time, he must start at once.

Realisation struck him like a blow between the eyes. He stopped in his tracks, terrified. "I'm mad! I'm mad! Supposed to be at the Town Hall by three, and here I am deliberately ruining my chances."

Instinctively he turned towards the road leading to Yarrowfield. Then he recollected that his violin was lying by the holt. Again he turned, racing back with the one determination—to fetch his violin and make off for the Town Hall. The fox must do without him. His career came first.

But the sight of that limp brown body was too much for him. He knelt down, forced open the cold jaws, and poured in a trickle of brandy, made a rough splint with two pieces of stick, and tied up the broken leg. He placed her in the holt with the cubs, and gave them bread soaked in milk.

By the time he had finished it was well after three.

A desperate run across the common—a ten-minute wait for the tram at the terminus—and he had reached the Town Hall at last, almost an hour late. An aloof steward told him he would have to wait now until the end of the list. Then, perhaps, Strelsi might listen to his excuse.

One after another they came forward. Some were fair and some worse than bad. The "Serenata" was murdered a dozen times that afternoon. The great Strelsi, a victim of temperament, never at the best of times patient, fumed and fretted. His shock of white hair bristled. His black brows and bright, piercing eyes looked ominous.

By five it was over. Neville braced himself, went forward and asked if he could play.

Strelsi glowered. "Who are you? Down on the list, eh? What, then! Ought to have been here at three. No, go away."

" But---"

"Go away, go away! Pish! Bah!"
The genius was dancing with irritation.
"Excuses are no good. Ought to have been here at three. An insult to me, coming late.
And my ears have listened to enough sacrilege. They'll burst if they hear the 'Serenata' tortured again."

Neville was very pale. He licked his lips and made one more effort.

"If you'll only give me two minutes, I——" He lifted his violin, meaning to start without permission. The first few bars might pacify the fiery Strelsi.

But the great man put his fingers in his ears. "Stop!" he shouted. "I've made my choice out of a poor lot. Beast, go away! Ugh!" He ran across the platform and disappeared through a door at the back.

"It's no use," said a steward. "When he's like this, he's unapproachable. Temperament, you know."

Neville nodded. He could not speak. Something choked his throat. He turned away and walked out of the hall. Outside a drizzle had set in, and Yarrowfield was a sordid vista of ugly brick and wet pavements, roofed by dusk.

With a strained, unseeing stare, he went away, and the building where Hope had died vanished behind him in the gloaming.

Strelsi left Yarrowfield that night in petu-

They reached the cross-roads where a

sign-post loomed vaguely. Strelsi drove

lant disgust. His sensitive soul was still wincing under the memory of the murdered "Serenata." He entered the big touring

straight on. The chauffeur made a comical grimace, plucked up courage and coughed. "S'cuse me, sir, you've gone wrong. Ought to 'ave taken the turning to the left." Strelsi glared. "Curse them! Why don't they have lamps? Tell me that, eh? Bah!" "'My ears have listened to enough sacrilege. They'll burst if they hear the "Serenata" tor-tured again." car in which he always travelled, took the wheel and accelerated viciously. chauffeur grinned tolerantly and shrugged his shoulders. He knew When the that look. great man's cheeks twitched and his piercing eyes flickered, silence was the best policy. Silence, and a mouselike stillness. Sooner or later he would return to normal, when his fit of spleen had exhausted

Their drive through the town was a series of narrow escapes. In his present mood, Strelsi had no thought for caution. Obsession of the moment was one of his failings. It was with a hearty sigh of relief that the chauffeur greeted the open road across the common. Less chance of accidents here.

itself.

He twirled his wheel, backing savagely. "I say, sir, steady on!" Sprutt!—Before the alarmed chauffeur could protest further, the inevitable happened. There was a lurch, a sickening jerk, and the car tilted. The rear wheels were in a ditch.

Strelsi snorted. The chauffeur got out,

brain."

his eyes fixed on the light ahead. As he got

he decided angrily. "Must be on my

halt. He drew a long breath, craned his

Fifty yards farther he came to an abrupt

Neville was in his music-room. He had

nearer he seemed to hear faint music. "That cursed audition's haunting me,"

head and stood entranced.

looked at the car and scratched his head. "Now we 'ave done it. Want 'alf a dozen

men to shift this, sir. An' I shouldn't be surprised if the back axle ain't busted," he added, with a sort of gloomy "I-told-youso" triumph.

Somewhat sobered, the genius descended. "Where's the nearest place we can get

help?"

Dunno, sir." The chauffeur looked

gone back to Mrs. Heap's, found his despair round in the darkness, then pointed.
"There's a light unbearable in that dingy, gas-lit room, and left it for the soothing oblivion of the com-The candle-lantern was fixed to a over there. P'raps——" The fox, recovered a little, was feed-"Âll right. ing her cubs in the holt with the scraps he You'd had brought. The night listened to a song better of bitterness. His despair was finding vent in the "Reverie." stop The sobbing strains stole out over the here, common and mingled with the wind. They held the voice of the sea on a lonely beach,

"Neville was very pale. He licked his lips and made one more effort. 'If you'll only give me two minutes, I---'"

in case anything comes along. I'll go across and see if I can get assistance."

He started across the murky common,

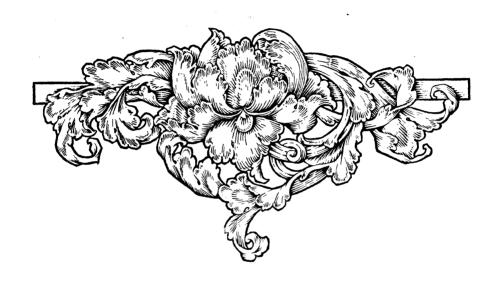
the grief of children, the tears of the world.

Every note came to Strelsi like a vivid,

poignant gleam of his own past, in those barren days when fame seemed more remote than the stars. Memories crowded about him, memories of the terrible struggle to keep his grasp on hope, slipping from his hold as fleet minutes pass at dusk. Once again he lived through his youth, and heard the long-forgotten sadness of his soul echoed up through the healing years.

Strelsi could contain himself no longer. He dashed forward, burst in upon the startled player, took him by the shoulder. His face was radiant.

"Are you real?" he cried. "Or are you a ghost? I don't care." He laughed with delight and pulled Neville's sleeve. "Come along, come along. Oh, divine capture, I'm jealous of you!"



JUNE.

HEAR the sound of summer revelry
Steal from the orchards where the thriftless May
Lies 'neath his pall of blossom; far away
Unto the wakeful bosom of the sea
Wind the shrill notes of panic melody
To break the slumber of the yellow bay—
And where I marvel in the tumbled hay
Echoes from sea and valley come to me.

So through this day that bird-enchanters weave
My heart is cleansed with song, and semi-tone
Of whispering trees; and now, in wonderment,
I mark the coming of the hooded eve
When all the voices that the day has known
Sink to the perfect silence of content.

PERCY HASELDEN.



A DIFFICULT MOMENT FOR FOREIGN WAITER STUDYING OUR LANGUAGE.

FIRST GOLFER: That little caddie hasn't half got a lynx eye.

SECOND GOLFER: Yes? How? FIRST GOLFER: He's just picked up my links. SECOND GOLFER: No! Where?

FIRST GOLFER: Out on the Links.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

WINIFRED-ONE UP! By Ralph Wotherspoon.

"THE question of putting hair up has to be considered," said Winifred.

She is my niece, aged sixteen. Her hair, at present, is extremely red and cascades artlessly down her back.

"It is one thing to have your hair up, it is another to behave as if you had it up," I replied.

"Oh, quite. But it's silly to behave as if it's up when it's down, don't you think?'

"Just explain yourself, will you?"
"Well, look at this"—she fingered impatiently her ginger mane-"this wretched thing gives me away. People know I'm under age. If I had it up nobody could tell how old I was."

"Or how young."

"Don't be silly, Uncle, please. What I mean is, I can't carry on if everybody's saying, 'Dear little Winifred, such a sweet child,' all the time. It cramps my style."

"Whoever said you were such a sweet child?"

"I'm not a child. I'm sixteen. I'm getting on," my niece informed me coldly.

"You ought to be," I rejoined. "Don't worry."

"Î know one thing—I'd get on a jolly sight faster if I did my hair up.

"Would you really?"

"Yes, I really would. You needn't think I don't know how to do it up, 'cos I do. May I do it up? Thank you so much.'

"I didn't say yes.'

"Well, say it now. Be a lamb."

" No."

" Yes."

"NO, I tell you."

"Go on, be a sport," said Winifred. "Look here, I'll tell you what. I'll bung it up and then

if you don't like it, it can come down again."
"'Bunging' it up," I said, "is not ladylike." "No, but putting it up is," she retorted swiftly. "What about it?"

"What do you want it up for?" I inquired weakly.

"Bless the man, what a question. What do I want it up for. What does he think I want it up for? My good Unk, I can't very well flap at grown-up dances, can I?"

"Who said anything about grown-up

dances?"

"I did," Winifred admitted, "and I shall probably say a good deal more about them, too."

I shook my head gravely. In the ordinary way I do this rather well. To-night, for some reason, the movement was not executed as efficiently as usual. It was inclined to be jerky.

"You're too young," I said.

"Too young nothing," my niece replied.

"Betty Norton's miles younger than me and she goes to dances all over the place—proper ones, I mean. She's done hers up. I know it looks fairly silly, but that's

because she's Early Victorian about it. Anyway, she's done it up. Why can't I?"

"Because," I answered patiently, "you are too young. Wait until you're a little bit older. Then

we'll see."

Winifred obligingly waited, as the gunnery instruction books have it, "five minutes." Then she gave tongue again.

"I'm a little bit older now, Uncle Hugh; may I do my hair up, please?"

"Go to—to bed," I said shortly.

"Can I have it bobbed? Or shingled?"

"Neither the one nor the other."

"Bingled, then?"

"Run along, my child," I urged with dangerous calm.

She seated herself on the arm of my chair and indulged in that light caressing movement which spells death to my Marcel wave.

"Uncle Hugh?"
"Yes, Winifred."

"You know that hat we saw in Brisbourne's?"

"I know there was a hat."

"You said I could have that hat when I wanted a new one. Well, I want a new one now. Can I get that hat, please, Uncle Hugh?"

By way of compensation for my previous

sternness I yielded.

"Get it," I said briefly; "get it, and try not to talk through it. Now go to bed."

My nicce laughed one of her light silvery laughs and bestowed a butterfly kiss on my left cheek.

"You're a funny old Un't," she said. "Thanks so much. G'night."



AS OTHERS HEAR US.

"So you've discarded Claude?"

"Yes, he used to laugh at everything I said—it got so boring." I know! He laughs at the most idiotic things, doesn't he?"

in fashionable and expensive headgear. She posed gracefully in various attitudes.

"How do you like it?" she inquired. "Quite chic, isn't it? But I say, don't you think it's a bit big?"

Now I know nothing about hats, and this was where I fell into the trap. I looked and was lost.

"It's a good hat," I admitted, for with Winifred's Titian hair the general ensemble was a cunningly attractive and entirely agreeable green-cum-red effect, "quite a triumph, as hats go, but—yes, I can see that it is somewhat on the large side."

"M'yes," she agreed. "Pity, isn't it?"

"A great pity, Winifred."

"And I'm afraid Brisbourne's won't take it back. They never will change things, you know, but——" she continued softly, "it



MISTRESS (sending out invitations): Have you ever been to a party before. Matilda ? Maid: H'only as a guest, mum!



NEUTRALITY.

HE (speaking of new neighbours): Well, they seem to be nice people; but I suppose we shall be quarrelling with them before long.

She: Oh no, we shan't get friendly enough for that.

wouldn't look half so big if I had my hair up—

In a flash I realised I was beaten. rippled on artlessly:

'You'd be surprised, Uncle Hugh, you

really would; you've no idea——"
"Oh yes, I have," I said resignedly. "I've a very good idea. If the hat fits—wear it." She thanked me with an angel smile.



THE REIGN OF THOUGHT.

A Ladies' Page recommends some task involving physical effort, such as giving a room an extra good turn out, as an aid to thought when one has an important decision to make.

To my comfortable study I am not allowed to go, All entrance is denied me at the door;

The desk is wearing dusting sheets, the chairs are not on show

And there isn't any carpet on the floor,

Till the task on whose completion she is vigorously hent

Brings an answer to her puzzle in its train. Even if she never tells me, I'm unlikely to repine, My relief will be so gloriously vast

When the home returns to normal as a token and a sign That Margery's perplexity is past.

T. Hodgkinson.

A PATENT unbreakable collar has been put on the market. You couldn't frighten our laundry with a thing like that. They'd crack it, somehow.



A CONTEMPORARY states that eggs are used in Armenia as currency. One of the drawbacks to the use of eggs as money is that you can't bang them on the counter to ascertain if they are good.



ROMANTICS.

"Come along, Barbara. Whatever should I say to your mother if you were swept off your feet by the passionate music of Italy?"

The pictures and the paperweight have wholly disappeared

And the window at the moment lacks a blind, And, in short, I can't help feeling it is greatly to be

That Margery has something on her mind.

Is it possibly a costume, can it haply be a frock. Is she pondering the purchase of a hat?

Is it deep deliberation over shares or over stock That is causing this upheaval in the flat? I hardly like inquiring for the reason of her cares,

On her problems I'm reluctant to intrude; But I gather from the scrubbing-brush that tripped

me on the stairs That Margery's in meditative mood.

To my lacerated feelings I forbear from giving vent, For I know that it is idle to complain

Jones and his wife were talking about the remarkable discoveries in King Tutankhamen's

"Isn't it wonderful, my dear?" said Jones. "They actually found in the tomb couches and chairs thirty centuries old and in good condition."

"Well," replied the wife. "I've always said it pays in the long run to buy the best."



A SERVANT at Pau, aged one hundred and ten, has been with one family for a century. On hearing this our domestic said, "You don't catch me getting into a rut like that."

"PUT 'EM ON THE LIST." By John Leith.

When a person is of the male persuasion, with a wife and three little offsprings, he must, an he wishes to survive, cultivate artfulness. So also of course must all persons employed in the Public Service, where, however, the quality is always called tact. It is the same thing—

Let us now get back to the wife and offsprings. She took a couple of days off last week, hied her to London town. They stayed at home and organised a revolt against Nurse: they always do when Mother takes a day off. Nurse says it's because they are little girls. In her last place—the Struffles's, you know, the Streatham Struffles—she says they were all



FIRST AID.

FRIEND IN NEED: Stand back there, give 'im plenty of air and one of you go and get him some brandy. FAINT VOICE OF VICTIM: Don't wait to get—the—air!

just got two appellations, a name and an alias, that's all, like so many other shabby people and things. Even in the Civil Service they are a little ashamed of the thing: references to it are mostly framed in the negative—"So-andso...But he is lacking in tact." This is an invaluable justification when it is desired to job somebody over the head of a man against whom nothing real can be urged.

little boys, and as good as good. However that may be, our daughters—names, Poggle and Piggle and Jikjak; ages, circa seven and five and three respectively—are—well, you'd have to spend a couple of days in our house when their mother is away before you'd imagine it even. Like that it is.

We come now to the artfulness. Within an hour of Mother's departure, just when the three

had got properly going, Daddy produced a double sheet of foolscap ruled in three columns, one column for each offspring, her name at the top of it. This paper was set out on the table in the dining-room, a pencil was placed beside it, and Poggle and Piggle and Jikjak were made aware that observed "naughties" would be recorded thereon as and when they occurred, and the paper put before Mother on her return from the days off.

The idea was not wholly mine. The late Sir William Schwenk Gilbert was the first actually to think of it, was so much pleased with it that he persuaded Sir Arthur Sullivan to write a tune about it. But I am the quick one that seized upon the notion and gave it practical application. The adoption and adaptation were mine, all mine, only mine, and the thing worked à merveille, which means, as you know, a miracle. Entries of course there were, but when I tell you that Jikjak, who is regarded as our worst, had only twenty-three in forty-eight hours, everybody must appreciate that it's a good, even a great idea. Poggle ran second with a score of nineteen, and Piggle was a bad third with only eleven.

Nurse entered whole-heartedly into the scheme and its success was largely due to her enthusiastic co-operation. Most of the entries are in her handwriting. From the record—it lies before me—I offer a selection of entries:

DATE: 11th.

POGGLE.

20 to twelve. Hitting Piggle.
1 p.m. Flouncing.
5.50 p.m. Opening Daddy's parcel.
5.46 p.m. Pulling Piggle's hair and Jikjak's hair, and said a wicked word.

DATE: 12th.

7.50 a.m. Playing about instead of getting dressed.
25 to 1. Flouncing.
1.30 p.m. Toying with her lunch.
½ to 2. Lying on Piggle.
2.45 p.m. Snivelling.
4.5 p.m. Telling a story.
5 p.m. Having sand in her shoes which she was told never to.

PIGGLE.

Quarter to 11. Knocking Poggle's head. 20 to 12. Temper. 1.30. Making nasty noise. 4.15. Flouncing. 5.7 p.m. Calling Poggle names and a vulgar word.

10.17 a.m. Sulking. 12.9 p.m. Dropping tins off the bal-

cony.

2 p.m. Making a rude noise at people.

5 to 3. Shouting at Jikjak.

25 to 5. Doing things she was told not to.5.13 p.m. Pushed Jikjak over, mean-

5.13 p.m. Pushed Jikjak over, meaning to do it.5.51 p.m. Touching things that don't

belong to her.

Jikjak and so see for themselves the kind of children that it disciplined into comparative law-abidingness. I am thinking of patenting it under the title of "The Nurse's and Parents' Sine Qua Non."

&&&

IN THE TOILS. By Herbert Hamelin.

SHE was caught—they had got her in their inexorable grip. Like some poor dumb hunted animal she wriggled this way and that in her frantic efforts to release herself from their clinging, tenacious, embrace.

It was late at night, she should have long since been in bed—and now they had sprung this surprise upon her. Surprise it certainly was, and a bitter one. She had never expected it of them, they had appeared so harmless a couple when she had first seen them. She had taken a great fancy to them at their first meeting, and had decided to take them home with her, in spite of all her husband's warnings that she might one day learn to rue her temerity in admitting such weird-looking foreigners into her house.

Her breath came in short gasps, the pain was getting unbearable. From her knees downwards she was beginning to feel numb. She would never have believed such torture possible—soon she would be unable to move. With her

JIKJAK.

11.45. Snivelling.
1.3 p.m. Hitting Poggle.
2.10 p.m. Upset flower-pot.
3.25 p.m. Walking on Daddy's hanky.
4.51 p.m. Picking a sore place.

8.15 a.m. Wouldn't eat her porridge.
9.20 a.m. Snivelling.
11.53 a.m. Pushing Piggle.
3.7 p.m. Calling Piggle a beast &

3.7 p.m. Calling Piggle a beast & pinching her.
4.10 p.m. Pinching Poggle.
4.55 p.m. Kept on making a face

at her Sisters.

I have pointed out to Nurse that she needs to pull herself together in regard to one or two matters. "25 to 1" and the like, for instance, will not do. It looks like something to do with horse-racing: "12.35 p.m.," that is the better way to record that. Also the crime ought to be stated concisely. "Touching things that don't belong to her," for example, is diffuse, chatty, lacks definiteness, sprawls all over the paper. "Meddling with ——" that's the way to put that down.

Anyway, there it is, the Bright Idea. I think the detail of its working is clear and plain enough. If it isn't, the original foolscap is in my possession and I shall be pleased to show it and explain it to bona-fide inquirers. They can at the same time view Poggle and Piggle and

dainty little fingers she clutched and clawed, striving to free herself from their loathsome clutches, but her puny efforts had no effect on their tough skins, which seemed as hard as leather.

With a strangled groan of misery she threw herself, mouthing and grimacing horribly, across her bed.

"Help!" she cried, in a feeble, pain-wracked voice.

"Good Heavens, darling!" exclaimed her husband, dashing in to the dim lighted room, to her rescue. "Whatever's the matter?"

Choking back her sobs, she pointed silently, and pathetically, to the vicious brown shapes which clung to her.

Horrified, her husband flew from the room,

and returned in a few seconds brandishing-a bootjack!

These new Russian boots are the very

6000

STUCK right in the middle of the pond where there was a hole in the ice was a post bearing a sign, "Danger."

"Now, Bobby," said his father, "if you go over there where the ice is thin, you'll be drowned."

Bobby gazed thoughtfully at the sign.

WILLIE was just back from the circus. He bounded into the room with a hop, skip and a jump. "It was great!" he cried.
"But what did you learn?" asked his

grandmother.

"What did I learn?" he echoed. "Just let me tell you. I learned to eat peanuts with both hands. That's what I learned!"



THE newest ailment is "Dancing Throat." One of the symptoms is that patients when gargling make a noise like a saxophone.



THE COMPLETE CONVERSATIONALISTS.

FIRST YOKEL (to second ditto): Cartin' 'ay ? SECOND YOKEL: Eh?

FIRST YOKEL: Cartin' 'ay ? SECOND YOKEL: Aye!

"I say, dad," he exclaimed brightly, "what happened to the man who put that notice there?"

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"NEVER bully lions," is the advice of an explorer. Many thanks for the hint. We must try to remember this next time we meet a lion.

"IT is only when a poet dies that the world realises what he has done," says a contemporary. Just as well for the poet sometimes.

"Perhaps I was a little cruel," he admitted, and appeared surprised when she returned, "Yes, you were." "I wasn't," he declared. "But"—after a pause—"I'll say I was cruel if you'll say I wasn't."

"Very well, dear, you weren't." "Ah, then I'm sorry if I was."

&&&

"LADY BLOWER seems in great request for opening bazaars."

"Yes, my dear, but she couldn't open a tin of sardines to save her life."

THE FLUTE-PLAYER.

Once a mere babe found a flute in his cradle Long ere he started to speak;

Blew down it, fingered the notes and was able Soon to elicit a squeak.

Quickly his tooting caused the uprooting Of all inclination to cry,

When his bottle goes cold he flutes now a bold Tootletum, tootletum, tie.

Tootletum, tootletum, tootletum-tieing When stung by mosquito or fly,

And when pins scratch his chest he'll mildly protest Thus: Tootletum, tootletum, tie.

See him a schoolboy still fluting emotion, Coloraturally gay. And his heart-broken grief this recitateef— Tootletum, tootletum, tee,

Tootletum, tootletum, tootletum-teeing, For collector of tax, schedule D; And he mourned his decease in a lyrical piece, Tootletum, tootletum, tee.

When he stood to be wedded he found the proceedings Altered on feminist lines.

"Do you promise this maid shall be always obeyed?"

He is asked, but quite flutely declines.

A blackbird-like trill says "Hanged if I will!

Martha to blazes may go:

For my chief I don't need her; this is my lieder—Tootletum, tootletum, toe."



LITERAL OBEDIENCE.

MOTHER: Well, Michael, why don't you sit down?

MICHAEL: 'Cos you said I wasn't to sit down to tea with dirty hands!

While hearts may be breaking, remorseless making Cadenza and shrill roundelay.

His boarding-school closed for an outbreak of measles (Closed for a week and a day).

While each schoolfellow weeps this tune he upkeeps Tootletum, tootletum, tay.

Tootletum, tootletum, tootletum-taying

While other boys weep (I daresay)

When the dear old school closes he callously blows his

Tootletum, tootletum, tay.

(Intermezzo indicating passing of twenty-one years.)

II.

Finding proceedings against him were slated For income returns falsified,

He learned that the income-tax man was translated (More simply, the buffer had died).

Life's darkest riddle inspired a twiddle Worthy of virtuosee,

Tootletum, tootletum, tootletum-toeing, While the bride was dissolving in woe;

Then with a cadenza he cruelly ends her, Tootletum, tootletum, toe.

B. A. Clarke.

&&&

IN THE TEA ROOM AT THE DRAPERY STORE.

BARGAIN HUNTER: My dear, I think it's perfectly disgraceful; there's supposed to be a sale on, and they're still charging a penny for buns.



A VIENNA doctor notices that the human ear is growing larger. Nature, it is supposed, is trying to adapt itself to wireless.

Explaining "Feminine Charm"

By MILLICENT BROWN

Illustrated by PENRHYN STANLAWS

NOTICED a curious thing recently my skin.' in a railway train. A nicely dressed woman entered and took a seat replied:

beside me. I saw that everyone was it? But looking at her—staring, in fact. But using fact.

not offensively, you understand. I caught myself doing the same thing. It

was impossible to help it. Certainly it was not her beauty of feature that held the eves of all, nor was it her costume. But there was something about her face and expression — I risked it; and spoke. "Would you mind telling me," I said,

"how you keep your complexion so dazzlingly pure? You won't think me impertinent, but you

seem to be over thirty, aren't you? And yet you haven't a line in your face, and your cheeks are quite peach-like. Do tell me how you do it." She laughed, quite good-naturedly. "Oh, that's very easy," she said; "I remove

my skin." "You what?" I exclaimed, horrified. Again she laughed, and replied: "Sounds shocking, doesn't it? But I will explain. Instead of using face creams, I use only pure

mercolized wax, procurable at any chemist's.

The wax has a gentle absorbent action which takes up and removes the soiled and weatherbeaten outer film-skin without pain, irritation, or discomfort. thus revealing the real complexio n fresh and clear underneath. Every woman has a beautiful complexion underneath,

you know. Then, to keep my face firm and free from wrinkles, I merely indulge in a

sparkling face-bath two or three times a week, which I prepare by dissolving a little stymol (obtained at the chemist's) in a bowl of warm water. This also keeps away those unpleasant little blackheads, and prevents 'shine.'"



THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

THE NEWS-SNATCHER.

What is there about the atmosphere of a railway carriage which makes people behave so strangely to one another—the reluctance to make room for a late arrival, the unnecessarily heated altercations over the opening and shutting of windows and the fierce curiosity displayed if another passenger happens to open a bag?

Then there is the news-snatcher, a particularly annoying fiend who looks over other people's shoulders and reads their newspapers. I heard one of this fraternity very effectually dealt with the other day.

An old gentleman in the corner seat reading an

evening paper was being unblushingly over-looked by the individual seated next to him. Presently he addressed the news-snatcher in polite tones and said, "I'm going to turn over to the next page now. I hope you're ready."



MUSIC AND MEAT.

A GERMAN caterer has made the amazing discovery that Mendelssohn's music kills the desire for ham sandwiches. Further researches regarding the effect of music on the appetite may lead to startling results.

Will it be found that the craving for oysters is deadened by Bach, or that the thought of consuming large

quantities of boiled mutton and turnips is unsupportable when Wagnerian strains fill the air?

A knowledge of this science coupled with a powerful gramophone could be used with deadly effect by boarding-house keepers at meal times, and restaurant-proprietors will have to be very careful about their music. We can imagine a waiter saying: "You don't fancy the sole, sir? Sorry, sir, it's quite all right. Oh, I know what's the matter, sir. I'll stop the band; it's playing an anti-fish tune!"



THE IDEAL LAWN.

I am all in favour of this new idea of lawns made of green rubber. They will be springier than the springiest turf, won't require mowing,

and will never grow whiskers round the edge.

Their portability, too, is a great attraction.

Think of the convenience of being able to move

the lawn from one part of the garden to another.
Also, you can bring it indoors after dark and dance on it all night. The rubber lawn will add a new joy to seaside holidays. It can be rolled up and sent on as luggage in advance, all ready



for tennis on the beach.

An elderly woman was boasting of her retentive memory. "My memory is excellent," she said. "There are only three things I can't



'Mummy, how big is a little bear?"

remember. I can't remember names, and I can't remember taces, and—and I forget what the third thing is."



OUR MODERN DOMESTICS AGAIN.

MISTRESS: If anyone calls this afternoon, Jane, I shall be out.

Maid: But I shall be hout myself, as it appens.



"I SUGGEST," said a famous orator the other day, "that the man of words looms more largely in the world than he has a right to do." That's rather a nasty one for the cross-word puzzlers.









If you have been seasick on every previous voyage you have taken, do not despair or forego the joys of travel.

MOTHERSILL'S SEASICK REMEDY

removes the cause, so that there is not the slightest feeling of travel sickness. No Drugs. No Danger.

Obtainable from all Chemists.





Every woman, whether shingled, bobbed or adorned with flowing wavy tresses, wants the lustrous, glowing, silkily-radiant hair that comes so easily with the use of "KOKO," which helps the hair to keep its colour—puts the sheen of health and life on the surface and the strength of growth at the roots. Give your hair a tonic, Thicken it and beautify it with "KOKO."

All Chemists, Stores, etc., sell "KOKO" at 1/6, 3/-, and 5/6 per bottle.

KOKO HAIR

KOKO MARICOPAS CO., LTD.,

16. Bevis Marks, London, E.C.3

THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

WHEN ?

She sweeps by with majestic mien My suppliant attitude unseen—At least, to all appearance: Her eyes that smile on others there Regard me with that kind of stare That brooks no interference.

With resignation in my face I ponder why this dire disgrace Should on my head be meted: And when she comes my way again I strive to make it very plain I still am undefeated.

Once more does she evade my eye, Although to catch her sight I try The best that I am able, "THE £100 motor-car," we read, "is coming to stay." Quite: but we are looking out for a car which is coming to go.



Snakes'-skin shoes, we read, are very popular. But not from the snakes' point of view.



PHOSPHORESCENT frocks are New York's latest idea. Just the thing for girls who want to shine in society.



"You are run down," said the doctor. "You



AN UNFORTUNATE TRANSPOSITION.

The Speaker (at a special meeting for working men): Rarely, indeed, have I been privileged to address—er—so many tons of soil!

She seems indifferent as can be—
When shall I get my cup of tea?
When will she serve my table?
W. H. Belchamber.



DOCTOR: What are you suffering from, madam?

PATIENT: I don't know what you call it, doctor, but I feel just the same as the patient you ordered to Switzerland for a month.



A MUSICAL cigar-box has been invented. We are not told how the music is produced, but we presume by the cigar bands.

need an ocean voyage. Will your business permit it?"

"Oh yes," replied the patient. "I'm second mate of the Anna Maria, just in from Hongkong."



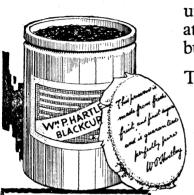
A DISTINGUISHED visitor was to spend a night in a certain small town, and the proprietor of the local hotel was notified to be ready. The proprietor was flattered, and set to work to have a bathroom added to the guest-room. His small son, however, thought this a piece of reckless extravagance.

"Just think," he said, "building a bathroom for one night; and then, after all, it might turn out not to be his bath night."





"It's a sinful shame!"



Jam will evaporate during storage.

To lessen the risk of our Jams reaching you short weight through evaporation we fill into the jars every year hundreds of thousands of lbs. more Jam than we actually charge for. That is the remark frequently uttered to our representatives at the sources from which we buy our **Fresh Fruit.**

They seem to think it a shame that such luscious fresh fruit should be made into jam.

We use only the Freshest and Choicest Fruit that money can buy.

Nothing is added but Pure White Sugar, which explains the delicious home-made flavour.

You get no glucose—no colouring matter—no preservatives—no pulp in Hartley's, but you do get

FULL VALUE

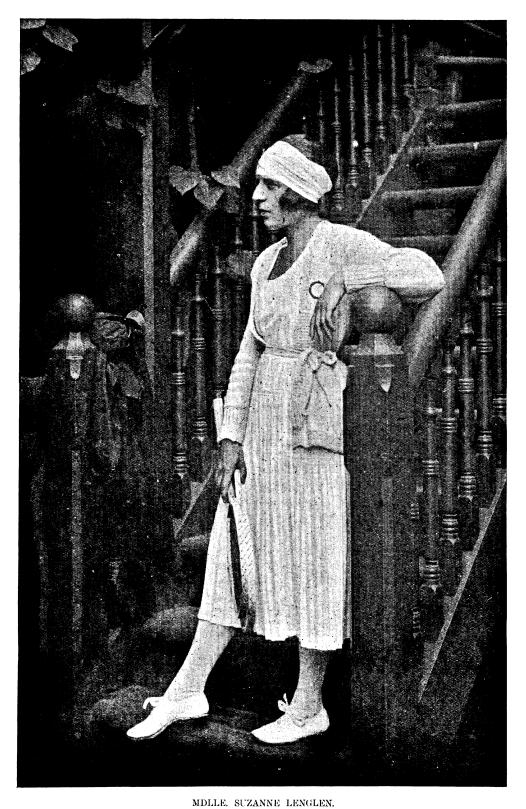
Insist on Hartley's —it goes furthest.

Hartley's

Raspberry, Strawberry, Black-currant Jams & Marmalade







A studio portrait by R. J. McKenzie, Eastbourne. Ece article by Mdlle. Lenglen on "Lawn Tennis and Sex Equality," page 125



"Wrapped in a fur coat, this unfortunate young man sat by the open window of the pink drawing-room so that the lively strains might reach the dancers."

THE PEERAGE CURE

By E. F. BENSON

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

T had been the most wonderful autumn for Mrs. Amy Bondham: never before had she lived so exclusively in the society of the great and the ennobled. She had spent October in a round (you might call it a merry-go-round) of visits; for though she had originally planned only four week-ends, she had made herself so popular at each of them that some member of the party had insisted, or at least consented, that she should spend the intervening days before her next engagement at a Castle or a Grange or something very moated and hereditary. Then, when the world began to stream back to London again in November, it was her turn, and every day the hospitable table in her house in Mount Street was laid for intimate and high-born little Though still fond of professional distinction, she had dropped, but only temporarily, her literary, artistic and histrionic friends, whom she meant to pick up again in the close time for the high-born circle which flocked to the Riviera after Christmas.

Just now her aim and ambition was the high-born, and the pages of her "Peerage," in which she put a little cross in the margin opposite the names of those who had entertained her or been entertained by her, became full of these discreet little pencil-marks, and pleasantly swollen became the album of picture postcards into which she gummed, with absolutely scrupulous honesty, only the photographs of mansions which she had actually visited, inscribed with the appropriate date. The rumour, therefore, that she bought these in indiscriminate packets, as illustrating the houses at which she would like to stay, was an unfounded fabrication, devised by the jealousy of less fortunate competitors.

Her circular and devoted little husband Christopher had accompanied her on her progress in October, but he was not so strong as she, and also was quite unable to resist

the pleasures of the table. Throughout November, in spite of the obedient walks he took daily round and round the park, he remained very liverish and gouty; and when, early in December, Amy was about to set forth on the visit which really was the crown of all her social attainments, he was persuaded by her to go off to Bath, and try to get fit again for the Christmas Campaign. This crowning visit was to the Duke of Whitby, and though it was certainly now coming off, it had required all Amy's tact and perseverance to effect it, for the Duchess had continued to be impervious to her hints for an unusually long time. But finally doggedness carried the day, the Duchess had yielded, and had asked her to Doncaster Castle while she was entertaining a beyv of distinguished savants from the Psychological Conference in York. It was not precisely the sort of party which Amy would have chosen, but if it had been a party of chimneysweeps and chiropodists she would have eagerly accepted. She could murmur her "Nunc Dimittis" now, and see about all the clever people she had dropped.

She and Christopher dined alone for the first time since September, as Amy delightedly remembered, on the evening before he went to Bath and she to Doncaster. For once she had broken her rule about the picture-postcard album, and had allowed herself to buy four striking views of the magnificent Norman pile in which she would be dining next night, and subsequently sleeping, if excitement would allow her to do so.

"I may as well put them in now," she said, "because they will just fill up the last page in my book. I must get a new one when I come back, for we're going to Eagles for Christmas and Tenterden Grange for the New Year."

"Better not, Posie," he said. "It may bring bad luck. The Duchess may put you off to-morrow morning. You've not got there yet."

She laughed.

"You superstitious old man!" she said.

"That's gout. It'3 just acidity. Morbid ideas like that are purely physical.—
Where's the gum-pot?—My dear, what a wonderful autumn it has been. Look, the book was nearly new in September."

She turned over the rich pages.

"All those!" she said. "I think I shall have it bound in a manner more worthy of its contents. I wonder what we shall have in the next volume?"

She came and sat on the hearth-rug, propped her back against the arm of his chair, and stretched her feet out to the blaze.

"Perhaps there won't be a next volume," she said, "for really, Christopher, I feel I've been very frivolous all the autumn."

The words "perhaps there won't be a next" gave Christopher a queer little shudder, but that probably was acidity too.

"You bet there will, Posie," he said, "if there are enough fine houses left in England to fill it. You have become a fashionable little dame."

She sighed.

"But there are other things besides that," she said, rather doubtfully. "There's that volume of Proust which I must read, and The Life and Times of Tutankhamen, and that book on Auto-suggestion. I shall take them up to Yorkshire. And when my visit's over I shall join you at Bath."

"Better not do that," he said. "You'll

be bored to death."

She considered.

"Well, we'll see," she said. "I've noticed sometimes in the paper that there are interesting people at Bath—and some interesting houses in the neighbourhood," she added.

There had been a week's frost in England, and Amy, next morning, seeing in the paper that there was skating in the north, decided to take her skates with her. She was quite an expert on the ice, having spent the last winter at St. Moritz, where she had come across a great many agreeable people, and had, in fact, laid the foundation of the superb autumn she had just enjoyed. One of her picture postcards also showed a lake below the walls of the Castle, and another a mediæval moat round it. Probably the lake or the moat would bear, and the idea of discussing the newest views on Autosuggestion with eminent psychologists, and then breaking off to astonish them by her lissome feats on the ice, was very attractive. Like most of her plans this turned out well. for the Duke was an ardent skater himself. and after opening the Psychological Conference with a weighty speech, he refused to attend any more meetings, and stopped at home in order to waltz with Amy on the ice-covered moat. His secretary was an adequate pianist, and he was bidden to neglect all his business and play dance music for them. Wrapped in a fur coat. this unfortunate young man sat by the open window of the pink drawing-room so that

the lively strains might reach the dancers, while Amy and the Duke pirouetted all day on the frozen water of the moat immediately below. One evening a Royal Princess dined at the Castle, and Amy grew greater than ever, for they skated again after dinner, and she nestled against the Riband of the Garter. She sat up half the night writing one account of all this to poor Christopher at Bath and another to a struggling young friend of hers who wrote paragraphs for the Press. She would make half a dozen paragraphs out of such material, and Amy, though yawning her head off, did not go to bed till she had fully completed this act of disinterested kindness.

The day of her departure, already twice postponed, arrived, and the pain of parting was slightly lessened by the fact that a thaw had set in. The Duke, however, said that the ice would hold for the morning, and they swished about in ever-deepening puddles of water. Ominous crackings and bubblings of air at last warned them that the ice was safe no longer, but then it was too late. A piece collapsed, and they were left standing in thick mud with icy cold water about up to the waist.

They struggled out, and Amy, after a change and a hot bath, protested that she never caught cold, and was none the She was urged to postpone her departure again, but Christopher must not be disappointed once more, for she was to join him at Bath next day, since the papers announced the arrival there of some interesting people. But she had a bad shivering fit on the way up to London, and it was evident that she had broken her rule for once and caught a severe chill. She was well enough next day to write an amazing quantity of postcards to her friends, asking them all to come and see her, but not well enough to travel. The day after she was not well enough to do anything at all except to have a high temperature, and all the friends had to be put off.

She grew rapidly worse: pleurisy set in. She became slightly delirious and babbled in a way that puzzled her nurse about garters and strawberry-leaves. It was in vain that she was assured that her garters were quite safe, and when her nurse told her that strawberries were out of season, she said drowsily, "Yes, but strawberry-leaves aren't." In the intervals of delirium, though her breathing was difficult, she seemed extraordinarily content and happy.

Then pleuro-pneumonia developed, and

Christopher was sent for. It was not a very severe attack, but there were disquieting symptoms. She made no effort of any kind to fight and resist: she seemed like one who had attained the goal of earthly ambition, and had no desire left for the accomplishment of which she had the will to live.

"I don't like that symptom," said the doctor to Christopher after one of his visits. "The state of her lungs is not such as to warrant our taking—well, a serious view of her condition, though of course pneumonia is always anxious work. Her strength is well maintained, her heart action is quite good, but she must somehow be roused. in and sit with her, and try to interest her in things which used to interest her. mustn't talk, but you try subject after subject, and see if you can't get her to rouse herself."

He shook hands.

"I shall be back about two o'clock," he said. "You mustn't be too anxious yet. She has plenty of vitality if we can only get it to work."

Christopher went to her room. She was lying quite still, her eyes sometimes open, sometimes shut. She knew him, and smiled faintly.

"Now I've come to sit with you a bit," he said. "How do you feel, darling? You mustn't talk, you know; better not to talk. I'll do all the talking. Perhaps you'd like me to read to you."

She seemed drowsy and very apathetic, but her eyes grew a little more alive at this suggestion.

"Yes, read," she whispered. Christopher."

On the table at the foot of her bed were the book by Proust and the new work on Auto-suggestion.

"Ah, I know what you would like," he "Something out of that book of Proust's which you took to Doncaster with you. Will you give me that book, nurse? Very interesting, I am sure."

The invalid's face grew fretful.

"No, not that stupid rubbish," she whis-

"Well, shall we try that book on Autosuggestion, dear?" said Christopher. "You were very much interested in that. You told me you were going to read it in the train."

Her forehead furrowed itself into unhappy

"Boring nonsense," she said. stupid you all are."



"Christopher gave a little squeal of triumph, and ran from the room."

which for once she had prematurely put into her book. She had said, too, that perhaps there would never be another book.

He felt he had known then that ill-luck would come of her ill-considered act. And yet how diabolical was the Nemesis that had followed it. Just because she had gummed a few picture postcards in. . . . "I lunched with a Marquis one day," he said brokenly.

begun again. Whatever can she mean?"
"Garters and strawberry-leaves," said
Amy faintly.

Christopher crushed his temples in his hands. Some remote association, dim as yet, began to form itself in his mind. It was connected somehow with something Amy had written to him in one of those wonderful letters from Doncaster.

"Your garters, darling?" he said.



"A faint flush came on her pallid cheeks."

"No, his," said Amy.

"She's wandering," said the nurse, shaking down a clinical thermometer. "I hope her temperature isn't going up again."

Suddenly Christopher sprang up.
"No, she's not wandering," he cried. "Oh, why did nobody tell me sooner? I know the sort of thing she means, and we'll get at it. She wanted me to read, too--"

He bent over her.

"About the Duke of Whitby, isn't it, dear?" he asked.

A faint flush came on her pallid cheeks. "Yes, all about him," she whispered. Christopher gave a little squeal of triumph,

and ran from the room.

He tore downstairs without a thought of his twinging too, and came rushing up again,

three steps at a time, with her copy of the "Peerage." He turned rapidly over the leaves with their copious little pencilmarks, until he came to W, and sat down

again by her bed, and read.

"Whitby, Duke of. James Francis Adelbert Charlemayne de Vere, K.G., K.C.M.G., K.C.B., O.M., P.C. Born 1882. Educated at Eton and Christ Church College, Oxford. Late Major in 1st Life Guards, Knight of the Order of the Holy Roman Empire, of the Golden Fleece. Married in 1906——"A happy little sigh came from the bed.

"Ah, that's nice," said Amy, in stronger

tones. "Go on."

"Married in 1906," continued Christopher,
"Frances Elizabeth Plantagenetta, second daughter of 5th Duke of Merionethshire, and has issue: John James Plantagenet, Marquis of Pateley, born 1908; Lady Cynthia Elizabeth Plantagenetta, born 1909. Aunts living—— Would you like to hear about the Aunts, darling?"

Amy turned her face towards him.

"Yes, all," she whispered, "and the collaterals. And when you've finished them go on to the Merionethshires."

Christopher read and read and read. There was no end of Whitby collaterals, and the Merionethshires seemed as the sand of the sea for number. But life was coming back to Amy, her breathing grew less distressed, her temperature declined. Half an hour's solid information about these noble lines was poured out in Christopher's sympathetic voice, and she seemed to grow stronger every moment.

At last it was all done.

"I shall get better now," she said. "It was just that I wanted, and nobody would understand. Christopher, you've saved me. I feel hungry, too; I should like a little chicken-broth, and then I think I shall have a nap. Tell everyone I am better and shall soon be well. So happy again!"

Dr. Elliott came back at about two o'clock, as he had promised. Amy was sunk in a peaceful, restorative sleep and was smiling as she slumbered. A glance at her and a couple of words with the nurse was enough for the professional eye, and he came downstairs again to Christopher rubbing his hands.

"Well, that's all right," he said.
"You've done the trick, Mr. Bondham. A marked change for the better, and I may say she's turned the corner. How did you manage to rouse her to interest in life again?"

"I read to her a little," said Christopher

modestly.



SUMMER MORNING.

NOW is the folding time
Of the weary moon;
The leaves of the dreaming lime
Like girls will gossip soon.

Give me thy scythe, O Death,
For my hands to break,
While morning with all her breath
Sings for beauty's sake.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

LAWN TENNIS AND SEX EQUALITY

By SUZANNE LENGLEN

LADY CHAMPION

PART from, perhaps, the ballroom, with the wonderful popularity it is enjoying just now, where do men and women most meet and mingle for mutual relaxation, exercise and amusement?

I think that to-day, and particularly in summer, the honour may be fairly claimed

for the lawn-tennis court.

Never in the history of the game I love has such a height of general popularity been reached. The lawn-tennis brother-hood and sisterhood to-day embraces the whole world; no game is nearly so universal; certainly no game in which both sexes can take part with some degree of equality.

In 1925 no less than twenty-five nations challenged for the Davis Cup. I cannot say how many possible nations have to come in yet, but I think this record entry represents the majority, the large majority,

of the inhabitants of the globe.

Even more women, it has been estimated, than men, play the great game; indeed, at one or two tournaments last year the men were outnumbered. This is an almost certain proof, for the percentage of my sex who, playing club tennis, enter also for tournaments, is far smaller than amongst the men.

Can it be doubted, then, that lawn tennis is having a lively influence on sex relationship in these days when the whole of that blessed or vexed subject is undergoing so many changes in other directions?

Most women who enter tournaments play in the mixed doubles, and here we get exceptional opportunities of seeing the capacities, strengths and weaknesses of men and women, not only in contrast, but in combination and in competition.

There was a time, and that not very long ago, when men regarded a mixed double as a sort of degenerate single, in which they did almost everything, and left

only the crumbs to their partners. It was a very one-sided partnership, and, save in exceptional circumstances, rarely rose above the level of "tea-party tennis."

But of how many of the mixed double events played at Wimbledon and the principal tournaments in England, on the Continent, and in America, can that be said today? Instead of that state of affairs one sees the woman player of to-day not hanging about at the back of the court and playing the long slow drives of other times, but boldly going up to couple her play with that of her partner at the net. There is a team work between the two which has never been seen before. Each is helping the other. It is true that it is still up to the man to force the game, to lead and press home the attack, but the partner at his side has also her great responsibilities. Her personality counts more and more in lawn tennis, just as it seems to be counting more and more in the joint lives of men and women of to-day.

Take but one instance. In taking it I may perhaps give a little advice on a point about which I am frequently questioned—"What should be a woman's position on the court, first of all, when her partner is serving, and secondly, when he is receiving the service?"

In the old days, of course, she used to be on the base line. But in my opinion her

proper place to-day is at the net.

Here are the ideal helpful positions as I see them. A woman should be just far enough from the net not to hit it when she takes a forward stroke. When her partner is serving she ought to be midway between the side line and the centre line, perhaps a foot nearer the side than the centre. When her partner is receiving the service she ought to move about a foot or eighteen inches nearer the centre line.

Her responsibility for a share in the team work is clear enough now. She has a double guard to keep, a trust she may not betray. The side line is her especial care, for she must not allow her opponent to send one

past her there ner is away in ner of the again, and this strongly still while her partthe other corcourt. Then marks more the change

strongly still that has taken place, she must be ready to cut off, by means of a volley, any quick passing strokes which come over her own half of the net, or, indeed, which come over the centre while her partner is making his way to the net.

I made use of the phrase "her own half of the net." I do not wish it to be misunderstood, for here again this change in the relationships of men and women on the tennis court made very definite. There is no such thing to-day "keeping to one's own side of the court." All the ridiculous ideas about a man "poaching" when he crosses the net to cut off a return,

belong to the limbo of forgotten things. There is no such thing as "one's own court." If a man crosses from one court to another, in his endeavour to force the game, he must be backed up by a woman who is ready to and capable of taking over not a part, but the whole of his responsibilities in the other court.

What a great change in the mental attitude of lawn-tennis players is seen here! Even Mrs. Larcombe, one of the finest players England has ever produced, has admitted

that she used to be fatally handicapped in this respect. Mrs. Larcombe's back-hand was world-famous for its strength and skill. The result was that, contrary to the usual rule, she was generally called on to occupy the left-hand court. Particularly was this the case when she was playing with Mr. S. H. Smith, one of the world's greatest forearm drivers. With what result? If her partner happened to be driven across into

her court she was, in her own words, "just miserable" because she was "useless in the other one." Mrs. Larcombe always stresses, in advice she is always ready kindly to give to a beginner, the importance of being able to play in both courts, and at the net as well as on the base line. What would have been said had she expressed that opinion twenty years ago?

The weakness of women players in the past has been, I believe, principally due to the fact that they developed one pet stroke at the expense of all others. Generally this stroke was a forehand drive, and they possessed but little ability on the back-hand. would run round a

ball—a terrible fault, really, in lawn tennis—rather than play it with their weak, backhand push. With this they were content, but, although contentment is a beautiful trait in life generally, perhaps, it is a disastrous one in lawn tennis. No volleyer can have a weak back-hand, for there is not time to jump across and take a ball on the fore-hand when one is at the net, particularly if there is a hard driver on the other side.

That reminds me of another point at which the women's game of to-day is



MDLLE, SUZANNE LENGLEN IN PLAY: THE FINISH OF A BACK-HAND DRIVE.

approximating very closely to that of the men. Very few men can go successfully to the net against terrific drivers such as Anthony Wilding used to be and Gerald Patterson is to-day. Consequently most men elect to stay back in these circumstances. Well, a man's drive—I am talking about ordinary tournament players—is almost always a good deal faster than a woman's. The result is that a woman, going

selves so as to be helpful. Is it any crime, is it unfeminine, for us to strive after being considered dependable to a greater extent than merely "keeping the home fires burning" on one modest half, and that the least difficult one, of the base line? I think most men to-day are ready to admit us to a greater degree of confidence and comradeship. How, then, can one best qualify to hold this position of trust unfailingly?



Photo by] [L. N. A. MILLE. SUZANNE LENGLEN IN PLAY AT WIMBI FEON.

to the net, has to face comparatively harder driving than a man. That some of us are doing it with a little success to-day speaks, I think, for itself.

This is all the more remarkable because, in singles, we get less practice in volleying than does a man. I really don't advise a young player to go up as general practice when playing singles. But in doubles it is absolutely essential. We are showing the world that, as in real life, so in lawn tennis, we are adaptable. We adapt our-

I am not going to make any excuse for giving my own personal experiences, simply because they are rather less mine than those of the only coach I ever had in the world, my father. I was only eleven years of age when I became the proud possessor of my first racket. My father, a player himself, of course, decided after a while that there might be some little aptitude for the game in his little daughter. Then, with the same thoroughness with which he does everything else, he took charge.

His method was, as far as I know, unique. He determined that I should specialise in strokes, and that I should take as my model—perhaps it would be better to say my inspiration—the best strokes in which some of the world's greatest players had specialised. Now the whole point of this

when I was only a child, had one wonder stroke. I do not mean to say that that was all he had, for it was backed up by strength in every department. But Mr. Wilding's fore-hand drive was, as my English friends say, "murder." Given that shot to play from anything like a favourable

position, Mr. Wilding was practically certain of ending the rally.

I was taken to see him. The beauty of that particular stroke, and the method of its execution, were pointed out to me time after time. Then I was sent off to a court, where, from the other side of the net, my father served me up balls on which I could practise this particular stroke.

Now here I want to emphasise, if I may, the fact of our independence to-day, even though it may in this case be only partial. I did not slavishly copy Mr. Wilding's stroke. I only copied the method and tried to get the result. For instance, he used to take that stroke when the ball was just a little higher than his waist, and he used to impart to it, with a whip up from behind. some top spin. play the same stroke at or near the level of my shoulder, and I hit what we call a perfectly plain ball.

hit what we call a perfectly plain ball. But apart from these details my method of execution is, I hope, something on the lines of the champion who gave his life for his country and mine on the Menin Road.

I must utter a word of warning to anyone who is at all likely to be influenced by my own experience. Lawn tennis is an individual game, and there must be no slavish copying of mannerisms as apart from stroke productions. Then again there are strokes

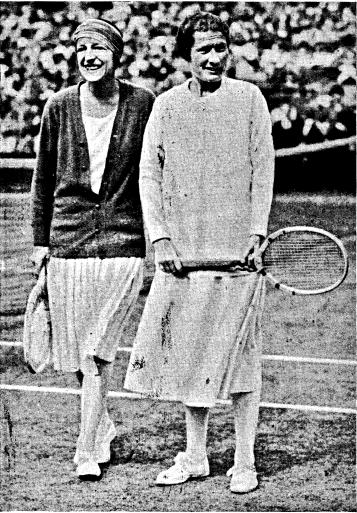


Photo by

MDLLE. LENGLEN AND MISS RYAN AT WIMBLEDON.

is that he did not choose women players. That is the reason, I suppose, why my game differs from that of most other women. It also showed that he was very far-seeing with regard to the future.

There was, for instance, that great player, great sportsman, great soldier, great gentleman, Anthony Wilding. Mr. Wilding, with whom I had the honour of playing

in which the ordinary player, man or woman, would only meet with disaster, nine times out of ten, if they tried to copy them.

Take Miss Elizabeth Ryan, for instance. There is no "cut" player in the world who is her equal. One need only watch her for about a minute to get at least one perfect example of how a drop stroke should be played. But don't think that because it looks easy in her hands it is anything at all of the sort. That shot is a gift to her, and has never been played with such consistent success by anybody else. The same applies to Mr. W. M. Johnston's whippedover fore-hand drive across the court. Anybody but the ex-champion of the world would send that particular shot out. It is useful, you see, as an illustration, but not as a thing to copy in every detail.

Here again I am reminded of a change in the relationships of the sexes when they are opposed in lawn tennis. There used to be a time when the "cut," which makes the ball hang, and sometimes even turn back, was not considered "quite the thing." Played against a woman who was at the back of the court, and who had no chance of getting to the ball thus cut, it was very often received in critical silence by the spectators. All that has passed away. We ask for no such favours to-day. we play a stroke which gives our opponent, man or woman, an easy cut, we know that it is our own bad play which is responsible for our non-success, and, I hope, we take it in the right sporting spirit.

It is no disparagement to my sex to say that the majority of women were not accustomed to be exactly "broad" in their sports view of games. But I think that lawn tennis is doing something to abolish that barrier which was apt to divide men in sport, not all men, but men as a class, from women. The women are getting, I think, the correct mental attitude, and surely this is bringing us all closer together! Lawn tennis is elevating women's sportsmanship, and calling, as it does, for the use of all the muscles in infinite variety, consistently and constantly, it cannot be bad for us, nor yetand there are some critics who are fond of throwing the slight on the game—entirely a feminine pastime. There are necessities which are common to both sexes, and we even claim that men may learn from us as we learn from them. I make no apology for referring again to Miss Ryan's drop shot; I don't think there is a man in the

world who could beat her at a game composed entirely of these shots.

In lawn tennis it is the best in oneself that is wanted. In games, as in life, the consciousness of a deficiency rises as a spectre to haunt one. It may be buried deep, but it is always there. It took me, for instance, six months to learn any sort of a back-hand stroke, and over two years' hard practice before the stroke could be described as really good. Miss Ryan had the same experience, and so had Gerald Patterson—even after those terrific services, volleys, and fore-hand shots had made him champion of the world!

One hears a great deal about temperament in lawn tennis in these days, and, of course, it plays a great part when men and women combine or oppose each other. Personality counts in lawn tennis as in life, and is developed by the game. Who has not seen the spectacle of players who always seem to be paralysed when they are coming up against some other particular person? I know one woman player who, for over a couple of seasons, used to crumple up in mixed doubles when a certain man was opposing her. And he was not one of the world's greatest by any means.

Her partner realised this, and, luckily, he was a person of insight and tact. The basis of all sympathy is, I believe, understanding and interest. Whether your partner is a man or a woman you should consider their individuality and control your own. What happier relationship could there be between a man and a woman fighting side by side for victory?

If I may be allowed to mention it, I have had men partners who have told me, after some strenuous match, how I have helped them when they have been "paralysed" by some bête noire on the other side of the net. I take that as a greater compliment than anything they could say about my mere play. Naturally I take my lawn tennis seriously, very seriously indeed; but I take life still more seriously, and the influence which the game has on it in the same way.

Look, for a moment, even at the mere physical effect of the game. One must be, and keep, physically fit for it. Then there is that wonderful rhythm, the joint working of the eye, the brain and the body. I may be overestimating the value of all these, but personally I think they do not result in our being, at the worst, less desirable companions in our association with men than were the helpless, unathletic women

of, say, the Victorian era. Naturally we have taken a greater share in this great game as we have in the game of life—but we don't want it all.

But gone, I think, are the days when a woman player, caught in that "Tom Tiddler's ground" the middle of the court by a volley, just threw up her arms and screamed, with never a thought of the partner for whom she was losing a point. Do they think any the less of us, do you think, if, caught at a disadvantage, we emulate their coolness and try, even desperately, to save a forlorn hope? Somehow I don't

think so! Sex must come into lawn tennis as it must come into everything in the world, but, with regard to the game I love, I am certain there is never any need, or the slightest justification, for the remarks of those critics who, knowing little or nothing of the glories of the game, talk about its influence as "unsexing" us. If they had ever played lawn tennis with a woman who was a pal and a partner, a help in time of need, and a reliable if not equal support when support was necessary, they would not talk and write such utterly wicked rubbish.

THE MODERN GIRL.

WHO dares to flout the modern maid?
Clear-eyed and valiant she goes
With close-cropped hair for a sleek braid,
Face as God made it, fresh as a rose.

With skirt close-kilted to her knee;
Free, unconfined, with a slim grace,
She walks the ways of the world and she
Uplifts the world that sees her face.

She is not shy, she is not bold,
She loves her work and loves her play;
The Modern Girl's a girl of gold
Whatever captious folk may say.

She fears no danger unaware,
She would pluck terror by the beard,
No ghost or goblin lifts her hair,
No shadows cloud her, unafeard.

She runs like Atalanta fleet;
At tennis she is the welcome guest;
Gives play to her body, slim and sweet,
Rides, swims and dances with the best.

A Red Cross Lady walks the world, Loathes cruelty and fights for the right, Is quick to the aid of the weak imperilled With her white shield, her sword of light.

She is as brave as any boy;

No straight conventions hold her down,
Ready for every strenuous joy

Or for the country or the town.

Fords rivers, climbs the mountain-peak;
Stands on the heights with steady head,
And still discovering, still doth seek.

What would her grandmother have said?

KATHARINE TYNAN.

THE ISLAND GAME

By G. B. STERN

Joint-author of "The Happy Meddler," and author of "Tents of Israel," "Thunderstorm," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK WILES

THE first-class railway carriage on the south-bound P.L.M. train held only two persons, a man and a woman. This is not the romance it promises to be from the introduction. The woman, indeed, was beautiful, with that well-groomed disdainful beauty which all its life long has been coolly sure of finding itself, when it wakes in the morning, no less a conquering factor than when it was put to sleep the night before. But she looked white and haggard, all the You could notice, and if you were a sculptor, revel in the moulding of her cheekbones, and in the way her hair was swept squarely back, dark satin stitched with threads of sharp silver, from her broad forehead. A very comely woman, especially when she smiled. She must have been about forty-two or forty-three.

The man noticed all this about her; noticed, too, that her shoes were doe-skin perfection, and her travelling-cloak a rich dark material lined with fur, which, somehow, always looks more sumptuous than merely a fur coat. He was, himself, middle-aged, short and genial. He had brownish eyes, a brownish suit, and owlish spectacles. He wore a spotted bow-tie that went twice round his neck, in that old-family-solicitor style which so surely promotes your confidence. His travelling-rug was thick and good, with large trust-inspiring checks upon it. He admired the unknown lady opposite him-certainly he admired her, but with an inward reservation in favour of his wife, who could still be termed "a fine blonde.

He wondered what secret she was relishing, with her slow mischievous smile, so obviously not meant for him. The train thundered on towards Lyons. Their one small light, discreetly shaded in purple, suggested that it was time for travellers to sleep. The man turned to his companion, inviting her opinion as to the need for window adjustment:

"Would you care to have this one down a little?"

She considered the proposal, rather mistrustfully:

"Smuts—" she suggested. "I know it's un-British, but I'd rather be stuffy than smutty."

The man looked worried. "I'd rather be smutty than stuffy. My business partner summoned me back from my holiday in a hurry, otherwise I should have waited, as I usually do, until a wagon-lit was available, or a lit-salon. But they were all booked up. Not a hope."

"I ran away in a hurry, too," remarked his companion. Adding in an offhand manner: "I'm an escaping criminal, really."

"Indeed?" politely. "And I, most reluctantly, am a Government official. You made an unwise choice of a carriage." He produced a visiting-card, from which she learnt that his name was Ninian Frank Pinner, and that he was British Vice-Consul at San Giacinto; also he appeared to be emphatically the leading spirit in the firm of Pinner, Pinner, Bernard & Pinner, house-agents, land-agents, and Western-Travel Bureau, San Giacinto.

"Is Bernard allowed to help at all?" she asked, with interest. And he replied, amused:

"On the contrary, my father and uncle both being dead, I am the most junior of the firm. Mr. Bernard is very kind, and lets me pull down the window-shutters, sometimes. . . ."

In return, the lady drew from her handbag a small thin volume bound in calf, gold pencil attached, and a monogram stamped in gold on the outside.

"The record of my crimes, Mr. Pinner. I'm running from this, and from the tele-

phone by my bedside."

He turned the leaves; saw that it was a diary for the record of engagements. Each date allowed half a page, and the pages were so hectically scribbled across, and so crowded

with appointments, and erasures of appoint-But she went on, quoting from the gossip ments, and further appointments, with columns: names and times and addresses, that it was "'I lunched at the Ritz yesterday, and a marvel to him how anyone could possibly noticed that the beautiful Mrs. Plantaganetguide their days by this bewilderment. It Hobbs was at a table not far off; Mrs. gave an effect of actual clamour Plantaganet-Hobbs, who is, of course, and the din of voices. The one of the Leicestershire Plantagaconfusion thickened over nets, is quite one of the most May and June and the photographed and sought first half of July; after women of our time. quieted down to a It will be remembered murmur of countrythat she played a houses and grouse conspicuous part shooting over in the Pageant August and of "Ethelred September. the Un-But this was ready,'' "'I ran away in a hurry, too,' remarked his companion. Adding in an offhand manner: 'I'm an escaping criminal, really.'" September 29th, and the October bookings were, if anything, mere delirious than those of May. "I don't blame you," returning her the book. "So this is what they call the Career of a Society Woman?" he inquired respectsuccessfully enfully. acted at the Albert "A 'Society Idol,' " she corrected him,

gravely. "One of Our Dashing Leaders of Present-day Fashion: the Beautiful Mrs. Plantaganet-Hobbs-"

Mr. Pinner leant back in his corner, and chuckled from head to foot; he was the type of man whose chuckle did not issue only from his mouth.

" Not Mrs. Plantaganet-Hobbs!" pleaded.

Hall three weeks ago. Also that she was the

innovator of the daring style of wearing only one earring, so much in vogue at present. The beautiful Mrs. Plantaganet- ${
m Hobbs}$ -

"Stop!" said Mr. Pinner firmly, "and tell me something about yourself."

"My dear man, this is about myself! I can reel off yards of it. Can you imagine



monster free jar of Nibbs' Nourishing Oats, nicest when eaten with jam or spinach—and will I give them a testimonial if my vitality improves on the diet?... Then three of my dearest friends ring me up for three separate chats, interrupted by the arrival of a real friend in trouble whom I've simply got

Humphry Ward . . . I make a rush for my bath after that, and listen to the accumulation of messages, parcels, masseuse, chiropodist, telegrams and costumier, madly heaping up outside. My bathroom is my only oasis, you see. When I get out of it, a trifle refreshed, I find a wired invitation for a week-end that I really do want to accept, and I spend the next hour cancelling everything else; and being told over the 'phone that I don't sound ill, but perhaps it is one of those deceptive illnesses. . . . Well," she broke off abruptly, "can you picture my useful and refreshing daily round, Mr.

Pinner, with a cocktail at every crisis? I've left out the special shows and concerts and Private Views; and I haven't even touched on sport. Of course we motor, and we fly, and we dance, and we swim, and we golf, and we watch the polo at Hurlingham, and we have to be seen at Cowes, and Ascot is not complete without us-

"I happened to be looking at my engagements for October; I had had two comparatively quiet months at country-house parties: 'A charming little gathering at the Duke of Blank's, showing, back row, reading from left to right: The Duchess of Blank, Felix the Cat. Mrs. Plantaganet-Hobbs, etc.' . . . that sort of thing. But in October the London season begins, and I suddenly knew I couldn't stand it. I had had Breaking-point. . . . I've away, and I'm not going back. I don't even know where I'm going. There are some quiet little mountain villages in Italy, aren't there ? "

"Plenty," said Mr. Pinner; "you get up to them on mules. Picturesque, but hardly fragrant when you do get there; I'm not sure that you wouldn't prefer your bathroom. Or," he went on slowly, "there's an island for sale, just about an hour by sea from

San Giacinto.

"Island" . . . magical word! It carried her, in a flash, straight back to thoughts of Harry. She had managed not to think of Harry for several years now; for that end she had piled her days so full, and her nights. Harry had been "dead nuts on islands." even when he was quite a little chap. had sworn that as soon as school was over he would buy a small twenty-ton cutter and go cruising about with his mother among the smaller groups in the Pacific—coral islands, treasure islands, desert islands; what was there about the word, haunting and forlorn, and with a never-ending call to it? island meant the glory of unlimited loneliness, with time to see the sunset, and time to see the sunrise, and always the sound of the breaking seas. To be alone with Harry, and to have the sea in a ring around you, would have been such fun, such glorious fun. . . . Her mouth rested in the old happy curves as she thought of it. They would have had to shift for themselves, of course; that was part of the game; and she had a curious knack with her hands, of being able to build up and shape almost anything into the way she wanted it to go. She would have been a good carpenter or shipbuilder—curious trades for a society idol; you don't use your hands for much, in society; but Harry had always found that she could cut a better boat out of a bit of driftwood, build a better fire against rain and wind, than any male he knew. They had been good pals, she and Harry, no doubt of it. . . .

If only she had known that special ice-run was dangerous! Yet that would have been no plea to put up to a fifteen-year-old son, daring and full of vitality. And he had always come through without much damage,

somehow, until that morning-

Afterwards, she packed her days desperately full of amusement, packed them to overflowing, so that there were no chinks through which memory might creep. . . . She was sick of amusement, now; sick of her own power and popularity; sick of meeting herself, face to face, labelled and docketed as a woman of fascination. was not true. She wanted, at last, to be quiet, and to rest. . . .

"Tell me about your island," she com-

manded.

II.

"I CAN'T help whom you met on the train," snapped Mr. Bernard, who, since the death of the two senior Pinners, had been able to do much as he liked with the last Pinner in "I've practically sold the island to this American fellow, Joseph P. Untermayer, the Elevator King; multi-millionaire, of course; all these chaps are. What he suddenly wants this island for, two foot by three, in the most inconvenient part of the Mediterranean, beats me! Still, I suppose he buys it in the same spirit as we buy an extra handkerchief when we have left ours at home and want to blow our nose. I may as well tell you, Pinner, I piled on the terms."

"What are you getting for it?"

"Two million lire. Old Ardissone didn't expect half that."

'My buyer will top it by another hundred thousand," said Mr. Pinner hardily.

In her first enthusiasm for the island, Miriam Beltravers had asked the little man in the train how much his firm would demand for it. Acting for their client, the old Marchese Ardissone, Pinner had not quite committed himself, but had suggested casually something like £12,000; whereat she had cried out, ardent as a schoolgirl:

"Twelve thousand! Oh, I'd have doubled

that."

So now, on her behalf, he doubled it;

"Mrs. Beltravers really wants it, you see; not as if it were just an extra pocket handkerchief."

Bernard made a few inquiries; and learnt that the lady in question was the Hon. Mrs. Beltravers, of good sound family, and good sound estates in England. And then admitted that the contract with Joseph P. Untermayer had not yet actually been signed, and that it was further open to him to cable Joseph P. Untermayer's lawyers, who were negotiating the matter, to say that another client had outbidden them.

Joseph P. Untermayer's lawyers cabled back, offering thirty thousand pounds. Miriam replied with £33,000. The bidding was getting warm. Had it been in an auction-room, you could have seen the flushed faces, heads strained forward, lips parted, ready with the next offer. . . . Mrs. Beltravers, disdainful as ever, hardly seeming to listen, yet her dark eyes betraying a gleam of brightness under drooping lids, anxiety lest the American should outbid her. . . . And he? Of course, the portrait was traditional: Great square jaw, dominant, out-thrust; the brows of a bully, the shoulders and bearing of a man who had trodden on corpses to win a callous way up to the summit of his financial ambitions. . . . Joseph P. Untermayer, the Elevator King!

The American lawyers cabled £35,000; Miriam lost control of her temper, for it was evident that she would have to recognise a limit, whereas this Colossus of dollar-power could go on as long as he liked, for what he wanted certainly far less than she did.

She made it £36,000.

Bernard recognised by her leap of a mere thousand that she was weakening. In his next cable to America, he urged that Untermayer should, for his next proposition, clinch the matter and shake off rivalry.

A hundred thousand pounds, Untermayer cabled back, coolly, as though multiplying the original bid by five were a mere nothing.

Bernard was very pleased about this. felt that it would not be good for young Pinner-young Pinner's age was something between forty and fifty !--if young Pinner's client should get the best of it over the senior partner's client.

Naturally, Mrs. Beltravers had to give in. She could not afford £100,000. She had been wrestling with giants, and the giants

had thrown her.

The final arrangements were completed: the contract drawn up, and signed on both sides; and in high good humour Bernard went off to Scotland for a long holiday.

Miriam sat at one of the little tables outside the Ristorante Due Fratelli, and looked across the shining mother-of-pearl sea. towards her lost sanctuary. She had so longed for quiet; and here in San Giacinto was gaiety, but very little repose. her head was a vivid striped umbrella, loyally green, white and red; around her, at every table, the foreign visitors to the Riviera chattered, gesticulated, and pushed little glinting cries of amazement at the tastes of Calamaretti, which were baby octopuses, and extremely pleasant when crisply fried. Over the window-ledge of every one of the tall houses, painted sometimes yellow and sometimes cream, but most often pink, that stand in a casual semi-circle behind this bay by the sea, hung the bright flutter of washing. Barefoot Italian children chased each other restlessly up and down the sands a few feet below the wall. Hawkers, and the drivers of one-horse carriages. and vendors of wine and macaroni and bathing-gowns, cried to each other in shrill tones of quarrelling or greeting, up and down the cobbled main street that tunnelled on the dimmer side of the houses. clamour and rattle of enjoyment were very much the same, translated, as they had been in Mayfair. All this voluble world-and, out there, the island which was not hers. . . .

She gazed across at it, and hated Joseph P. Untermayer.

The Italians called it "The Little Isle of the Enchantress." The name was more fascinating than the more formal one that had appeared in the documents of Pinner, Pinner, Bernard & Pinner. It rested tranquilly on the horizon, like a ship becalmed. Just the right sort of island, aloof, rockbound; giving a glimpse of some building on the crest, so old and craggy that it might well have been mistaken for more rocks. How she would have loved to explore the further side of it, tantalisingly hidden now from the eyes of those exiles on shore. she would have revelled in her first discovery of the harbour. No, she had never been rowed out to the island; she had not dared, until she knew if it were to be hers, in case she should grow to love it with even more perilous ardour than already. But there was a harbour; Pinner had told her so: only it was invisible until your boat slipped, on a wave, between the cunning portals that nature had contrived. How she would have enjoyed, too, her first voyage, alone and on foot, round the extreme edge of her own island; walking softly, as though trailing an invisible thread behind her, knotting it again when she re-met the place from which she had first started; thus childishly, triumphantly, proving to herself that it was now hers—her encircled and solitary territory.

Why, that man, that blatant brute of a man, across the Atlantic, he would probably never go near the island! He might have heard of it casually, and fancied it during the mood of an hour; then had his purpose hardened by opposition, by learning that someone else was after property that he had intended making his own. He might, perhaps, if he could spare a few weeks in a year or two from now, run over in his yacht, and see what it was like, and expensively install all the latest improvements—("A hydraulic lift up the hill to the castle," thought Miriam, bitterly)—and go away again for another ten years, and hustle some more, and acquire even greater wealth, and forgetfully buy other islands. Men like that ought not to be allowed to rule the world; men like Joseph P. Untermayer!

. . . The sun had just set behind the Maritime Alps to the north-west, and its red reflection lay like pools of spilt burgundy over the water, so that the little Isle of the Enchantress looked at once unreal and flamboyant, as though it were trembling on the edge of a sudden disappearance. . . . Miriam leant towards it over the wall, and clenched her fingers tightly on the stone, as though by hurting herself she could squeeze out some of her angry disappointment:

"It's one of those quite irresistible beckoning islands," she told herself. She was not used to being thwarted over anything she really wanted badly. And that night, to torment her longing still further, mockery sent a round copper-coloured moon straight up out of the sea, to hang heavily awhile between the broken stone turrets of the old house on the island.

And suddenly Miriam resolved that she would quietly eliminate Joseph P. Untermayer. She would just behave as though he did not exist, as though he were "Wrong Thought," or something equally abstract. She would row over to the island to-morrow, and have her possessions brought over, and live there as though it were hers. It was like all divine notions, exceedingly simple. Who

was to stop her? Mr Bernard would certainly have stopped her, but he would be in Scotland for the next three months; and perhaps he would be drowned while troutfishing. Mr. Pinner would not stop her, even though he was Vice-Consul; she would talk to Mr. Pinner, who liked her: she suspected within him that element of the schoolboy which delights in rebellion. The Marchese would not stop her, for he lived on the other side of Italy, and his age was ninety-nine: and having received the cheque for £100,000, he cared nothing more what became of the island. And assuredly Joseph P. Untermayer would not stop her, for he was not there, and would not know.

If or when he did come over . . . Miriam's smile was all of confident roguery. Why, could not she, who had bewitched so many men, trust herself to do a little useful bewitching of this hulking, domineering bully with the powerful jaw and the sledgehammer business methods? That type was the easiest to manage. He would be powerfully angry at first, of course, and bluster a lot, and talk about the law, and "my property," and the sum he had paid for it. . . . And then it would begin to dawn on him that she was a beautiful woman, and he would not know that she was amazingly experienced in the arts of enchantment, which had resulted, almost always during her forty-two years, in having her own way. He would not recognise, in fact, what she was subtly doing to him . . . until after he had been persuaded to sell his island again for £25,000, a fair price, and go back to his elevators. and not to be a bother to her any more.

What Mrs. Beltravers planned, and what she set out to do in that inexorably persuasive way of hers, had a knack of happening perfectly. Mr. Pinner, as might have been expected, expostulated, and used a great many legal terms; but Miriam merely laughed at him. You can't be foe to a woman who so delightfully takes it for granted that you are her ally, both practically and in spirit. Mr. Pinner drifted so far from righteousness as to help her make arrangements for provisions to be landed at regular intervals, and for all she needed to be taken over to the island; and to engage a couple of servants, true Italians, lighthearted, with excellent manners and no morals, who, suspecting that everything was not as it should be in the transaction, found, therefore, a flavour in it that was all the more to their liking.

But Miriam would not permit either Mr.

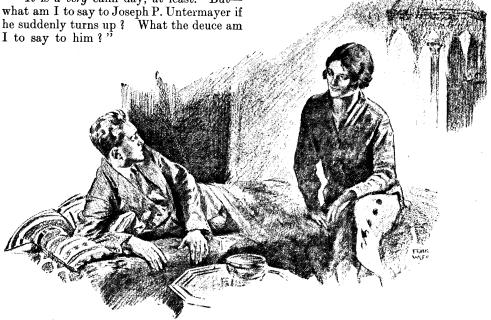
Pinner or the servants to be with her when she set out, herself, for this fragment of land upon water that was her heart's desire. There are certain rules for those who play the island game, rules which they know subconsciously, and which they know must be obeyed; and one of them is the thrilling rule that you must set foot on the island for the first time alone. . . .

"Good-bye," she cried out happily, from the boat; "you have been a darling; I hope you won't regret it."

Mr. Pinner replied less happily, watching

her from the end of the rough stone jetty: "It is a very calm day, at least. Butwhat am I to say to Joseph P. Untermayer if he suddenly turns up? What the deuce am trouble was that she still felt that the island might have been perfect, that it just needed some twist, some change. . . . As though there were a riddle, and she had forgotten the answer; a secret; a lost rule in the game. . . . Meanwhile, she wandered about restlessly with nothing to do, and stared often at the mainland, and looked at the sunset and at the sunrise as if they were elaborate pieces of mechanism.

What did you do on an island, by yourself? She wondered, drearily, if she should throw it all up and go back to where be-



"'Look here, why did you row out here by yourself this evening?' And the boy answered, amazed that she should have put so simple and obvious a question: 'Why, it's one of the rules, isn't it? I mean, you have to, if it's for the first time to your own island."

But he got no answer to that, except Miriam's clear wicked laughter, while she bent over the oars. She was further away now, but he fancied he heard her say:

"Send him over to me." . . .

III.

"I HAD better face it," Miriam reflected moodily, staring towards the mainland. What she had got to face was this: that she had been nearly a month on the island, and she was more bored than she had ever believed it possible for anyone to be bored and yet to go on living. Even London was better than this, and the crowded engagement-book, and the decorative pageantry of her career as a leader of society. And the

longed the more frivolous part of her? It was the 29th of October; if she hurried, she would still be in time for the Clairmonts' Tudor Ball; she had meant to go as the Lady. No journeyings to-night, though; a storm was travelling swiftly round Capo Berta, from the west. They had warned her of these autumn gales along that coast. The sky was a threatening purple, and the sea muttered and groaned against the rocks; while, grinning farewell between the mountains and the extinguishing roll of cloud, the sun threw its level reflections on to the sea, like hard metal on metal A few minutes later, the air was a dark hiss of rain.

Miriam found the storm more congenial to her present mood than fair weather. She

wrapped herself in warm woollens and an oilskin, and went out on the little terrace of her home. It was then that she saw a small. dark object being tossed like a cork along the surface of the waves; but it was larger than a cork; it was, in fact, a boat with one person in it. Was he mad, putting out in this weather? It could not be an Italian with food or a message for her; Miriam knew that Italians were too aware of the difficulty of landing. It was a stranger, gallantly struggling to row, so that the little boat should not be entirely at the mercy of the storm which spun it along.

"Heavens! I hope he's been warned where to find the harbour. If not, he'll crack up like a nutshell on those rocks."

She hastened down, fighting the wind, towards the nearest point whither the boat was driving; and making a trumpet of her hands, she called and called. Her voice was less than a child's piping against the hurri-The boat was practically in the surf now; the next wave lifted it high. . . .

And some miraculous luck, that brought the sobs choking up thankfully out of Miriam's throat, swirled the boat and the lunatic in it through the almost hidden

gap, into the island's little harbour.

From where she was, Miriam could not quite see what had ultimately happened. She tore down the crude steps cut in the side of the rock, switched on the electric torch she carried in her pocket, and saw that the boat was overturned and floating; and the rower was lying face downwards, exhausted, on the pebbly beach. She ran up to him; twisted him round by the shoulders. looked up at her and grinned:

"Hullo," he said feebly; "I'm rather

It was a small boy, or at least a very skinny boy, with an appealing, thin, freckled He might have been about fourteen. Miriam said to him, sternly:

"Are you mad, to have started out in a boat with a storm like this coming on?"

He sighed, and snuggled up to her in the confiding fashion of a child who has found safety and warmth after peril.

"Don't be cross," he murmured. to come over; you see, it's my island."

Then he fainted.

When he came to again, he was lying on a couch in a very pleasant sitting-room. A lamp shaded in gold silk glowed softly from one corner; and the woman whose face he

had liked so much, during his glimpse of it out in the storm, was sitting beside him, dabbing his temples with cold water.

"Say, you know, I think I've had almost enough of that! Cold water, I mean."

"So you're Joseph P. Miriam said: Untermayer?"

He nodded, and grinned wryly, as though it were something to be ashamed of.

"The Elevator King?"

"That's right."

And, like one who is sure of finding sympathy, he added:

"It's not much fun, having been an elevator king almost all your life. Dad died when I was three, and left me to it."

"You have had everything you wanted,

haven't you?"

"Full and running over. And nothing I

really-wanted."

The woman felt her heart grow warm towards this odd, half-drowned little multimillionaire, so comically unlike her conception of that Joseph P. Untermayer who had great hulking shoulders and an aggressive jaw. Remembering how she had planned to captivate this truculent figure of legend, she remembered also that she had a confession to make:

"Mr. Untermayer," said Miriam very humbly, "I've been quite brazenly living on your island for the last month, as though What is your law against it were my own. trespassers?".

He questioned, eagerly:

"Are you the woman who was trying to buy it at the same time that I was buying it? I imagined you different, you know; frightfully different . . . I'm real sorry, but I just had to have this island directly I heard of it; I had to have it."

His voice was desperate now, with a far too old desperation for his years; he spoke like a thirsty man who has been given food, and nothing but food. And Miriam, understanding, said:

"Was it to have a place to run away to?"

"How did you know?" sharply.

She told him then, holding his small, cold fingers clasped in her hand, how she, too, had run away. She told him, in that curious mood of friendliness which had dropped upon them, making them seem like two of the same age who had satisfyingly and quite unexpectedly found one another, what her habit of life had been, over in England, before she had decided to defy it, break it up and leave it behind her. And he told her, in his turn, a story which he debonairly tried to make amusing, but through which the pathos showed like bare flesh through a tattered garment, of what it was like to be an elevator king from the time you were three; of the fuss and responsibility and burdens; of great power, loads of money, and still more towering loads of ready-made gifts and possessions; of his utter weariness of it all. . . .

"And I'm dead keen on doing odd jobs myself, with my own fingers," he explained; "no, not all that dreamy 'pretending' stuff that you read about—I'm not that sort of moony idiot! What I'm after is planning and building, fiddling about with bits of string and wood and brick, fixing things so that they work because it's my hand that has fixed 'em just so. . . . Only I've never had much chance, d'you see, and I'm rotten bad at it. But I thought on the island . . ."

"I'm mighty good at it," said Miriam.
"We'll have a splendid time.... Look here
"She suddenly decided to test him, sure that she had made no mistake, but that Joseph P. Untermayer was the play companion for whom she had yearned. "Look here, why did you row out here by yourself this evening?"

And the boy answered, amazed that she should have put so simple and obvious a question:

"Why, it's one of the rules, isn't it? I mean, you have to, if it's for the first time to your own island."

Her heart exulted. . . .

And then she noticed how worn-out he looked, and told him, severely, that he was to lie quiet and not talk and do as he was bidden. And he seemed quite contented with that tone, too, helping her to guess what he had not yet told her: that his mother had been dead even longer than his father. . . .

"One of the beastliest things about me," he muttered, and shyly turned his face away from her, towards the window, "one of the things I hate most, is that I'm always getting crocked, and have to be taken care of; swarms of doctors in consultation, and all that; I simply loathe it."

But Miriam, recognising that Heaven, in a beneficent glow, was showering blessing after blessing upon her, imagined that he would not loathe it quite so much, from her. . . . This second son of hers must not be allowed to dash himself about, as Harry had done; fearless as Harry, he was also frailer; needed Italy's sun, and Italy's carefree existence. It struck her as queer, how she was planning their future as though taking it for granted that they would spend it together. But then, suddenly, Joseph P. Untermayer said, with that funny old-fashioned courtesy that seemed to visit him fitfully, and then to leave him again a small

"I do hope—it would be a great pleasure, if you would only allow me to share the island with you."



boy:

SINGING GREEN.

OH, there's the sun for shining, and there's the sky for blue,
And there's the grass for singing, green with daisies scattered through;
Oh, if you ache with liking or if you ail for love,
Come, loiter in the singing grass and watch the blue above.

Oh, there's the wind for rustle, and there's the stream for drowse, And each bird has a singing note and all the forest boughs; Oh, if you fret with waiting, or if you love o'er long, Come, wander 'neath the forest boughs and listen to a song.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

THE QUEEN OF **CLUBS**

By F. G. L. FAIRLIE

ILLUSTRATED BY KEITH BRYANT

TETER looked around him. "My dear," he said, turning to his wife, "the news has got abroad. The court circular has announced it. Do

you see the result?" Delphine smiled at me.

"How many cocktails did he have?"

"Two," I replied, "but he always had a weak face."

Peter sighed.

"Very well," he said, "don't notice it. But I should have thought that a good wife would have been slightly perturbed, when the arrival of her husband at a seaside hotel coincides with the advent of a bevy of beauty."

We had come down to Seabank for a few weeks, Delphine, Peter and I, in order to give Peter a chance of recuperating from a bad motor smash in which he had been a victim. It was really too early for the place to be crowded, but a few leisured people had taken advantage of the particularly mild spring to come down to the South Coast resort and idle away a few hours in the open air, either on the tennis courts or the golf course. A steady influx of female visitors to the hotel had, however, started directly after lunch, and now the previously almost deserted restaurant was filled to capacity with ladies, mostly young, but all of a distinctly masculine type. There was one exception, a pretty little lady whom I had already noted in the hotel lounge just before

"Bevy of beauty," said Delphine cattishly, "scarcely describes them. You mean a muscular chorus."

"Tut, tut," replied her husband, "control thy tongue, female. Remember that to the poor weak man, the cave-woman is not without attraction! Beware, lest thy purely feminine charm should prove insufficient

to hold my love against the onslaught of ligament and tissue. In point of fact, however, do you know why they have come?"

"Not the least idea," I said.
"Let us find out." He beckoned to a waiter. "This hotel was empty before lunch. It is now full. Yet my calendar tells me that we are not yet in spring."

The waiter smiled.

"It's the Open Meeting at the Golf Club, sir," he said, and added "Ladies."

"Quite," said Peter. "I had an idea that it was ladies. When does it start?"

"The day after to-morrow, sir,"

"Thank you."

Peter carefully drained his glass of port. "I came for quiet," he said, "in order to regain my falling strength. Now quiet will be gone, the air will become hideous with golf noises and brassie talk. Ah, well! One's sins follow one everywhere."

He put down his glass.

"Shall we adjourn to the drawing-room. my dear, and prepare a book? I've no doubt the gaming instinct is alive in female golfing hearts. Out of this evil may vet come good."

But his project was effectually stopped in the lounge. A large board had been put up. Alive to the possibilities of the situation, the hotel had organised a sweepstake. We duly purchased tickets. Shortly afterwards, and owing to the doctor's orders, we put Peter to bed.

After accompanying him to his room, Delphine and I came down again to enjoy a final cigarette and a good-night glance at the array of female golfing talent occupying all the chairs of the lounge. I kept my eyes open for the attractive young lady whom I had noticed before dinner, but she was nowhere in sight. Finding no room in the lounge, we wandered towards a little writing-room which Delphine had discovered in the morning, and went inside.

Lying on the couch at the far end opposite the door, an opened letter in her hand, a girl was sobbing her heart out into a cushion. With a shock I recognised the slim figure. It was the girl for whom I had been looking.

I immediately withdrew, giving Delphine a little push. My cousin is without exception the kindest-hearted and sweetest woman I have ever met, and here was obviously a case for a little comforting. I wandered back into the lounge, by good luck found a table which had just been quitted by two particularly sporting-looking golfers, and ordered myself a drink. I then lit a cigarette and prepared to await developments. about half an hour, when I was contemplating the possibility of another drink, Delphine and the girl entered the lounge and came over towards me. Dressed in a pale yellow creation of silk edged with fur, the girl was of medium height and perfect proportion. Her hair, becomingly shingled, was fair, and her eyes, still showing traces of the recent tears, were of an almost startling blue. Her features were small and regular, and without being beautiful in the strict sense, she was undeniably attractive. up as they approached.

"Jack," said Delphine, "this is Miss Wentworth. She's coming to have a cup

of coffee with us."

I took her hand, and smiled. She instantly smiled back, and sat down. I beckened to a waiter.

"My dear," said Delphine, "he is my cousin, but not very reliable. I've got a husband too, but he's not well just now after a motor smash, and we've sent him to bed."

"I've seen him," she replied; "he looks a 'ear."

I could see that Delphine was thrilled. The girl had struck just the right note with her.

She left us soon after, and as she walked across the lounge, Delphine turned eagerly to me.

"Isn't she a darling?" she said. "Poor angel, she was crying her heart out with loneliness!"

"Why?" I asked.

"My dear, just imagine it! She's never been away from home before, not even to go to school, as she always had a governess. She's been winning all the cups at home, and her father insisted that she should come and have a try at an Open Meeting. Now she's got here, the poor child doesn't know a soul and is feeling wretched."

"Why didn't her father come with

her ? "

"He was going to, but couldn't come at the last moment, and now she's got a letter to say he can't come at all."

"Poor kid."

"She was on the point of packing up and going home, but I said we'd look after her. She's going to have her meals with us."

I smiled.

"Delphine, you're a dear, sweet thing. I think that's an awfully good idea!"

My cousin got up.

"We must go to bed," she said. "This unaccustomed sea air is making me tired. But Jack, you must promise me something?"

"I'll bite. What is it?"

"You simply mustn't flirt with her. She's much too young."

I laughed.

"If she doesn't encourage me," I said, "that's a bet."

"But she might out of sheer innocence. Promise, Jack!"

For a moment I hesitated. Then:

"All right. If I find the strain becoming

too much, I'll take to golf!"

Delphine laughed. I went upstairs with her and left her at the door of her room. Then after making sure that she had definitely retired for the night, I went quickly downstairs to the office of the hotel. The reception clerk was on the point of shutting up, but I was just in time to elicit the information I was after.

I found what I had expected. No room had been booked for any Mr. Wentworth. Miss Phyllis Wentworth was the only guest of that name residing or expected at the hotel. On my way back to my room I passed through the lounge, quite near to a party of four, one of whom I had noticed sitting at the table next to ours in the restaurant. I could not help overhearing one of the remarks.

"I've drawn a Phyllis Wentworth in the first round. Anybody know how she plays?"

In the light of my recent discovery I might have told her not to worry about the outcome of the match.

Was it Delphine's pearls she was after?

I smiled to myself a trifle grimly.

I decided to say nothing to either Delphine or Peter. I saw no point in worrying Peter

when he was not at his best, and with regard to Delphine, I felt a little responsible for this friendship. Phyllis Wentworth had laid her trap skilfully, but my push had sent Delphine headlong into it.

By lunch-time the next day the girl had made rapid strides. She had completed the capture of Delphine's affections, and had won Peter absolutely. She was desperately attractive in her manner and little

"I'm jealous of Peter!" I said, as we "Whatever for?" she asked.

"He calls you Phyllis."

She laughed.

"Well, it's a nice name, isn't it?"

"Charming, Phyllis. There's a song about it which describes you rather well."

"Jack," she said, "I've come out for serious practice."

"You shall have it, Phil."

No answer.

"Silence is golden," I said; "it is also a good sign. I'm one up now on Peter, Phil. In fact, I'm not sure I'm not dormy. You can't reduce it further, can you? I mean, he can't very well call you Ph.

"Don't. It sounds Teutonic. But



ways, and more than once I found myself wondering whether my suspicions could possibly be ill-founded. Yet the evidence of her own story and the hotel book was clear enough. However, I gave her no sign, and set myself on to the pleasant task of a mild flirtation.

After lunch Peter and Delphine went off for a drive in a hired car. Miss Wentworth announced her intention of going up to the links for a final practice, and permission was granted me to accompany her.

" Yes?"

"Yes. 'Yes, dear,' when I offer you a drink, or 'yes' softly, when we're sitting out the fourth extra. That's when I've asked you for a kiss."

For a moment she said nothing.

"How much faster than an aeroplane do you travel?"

"Oh, a lot. Light is my only serious competitor. We both travel at about the same number of feet per second. I say, who are you playing to-morrow?"

"The lady champion of Cornwall," she "I'm afraid she'll be too good laughed. for me."

"Oh, no," I said. "Serious work this afternoon, and it's a certainty for us. Come

along."

We had reached a secluded portion of the links. The early starters could be seen clustering round the first tee in the

to my amazement I discovered that she really was a player of class. Feeling like a retriever, I duly fetched the balls at regular intervals, but I was not very sorry when the arrival of a couple playing the round cut short my fair companion's efforts.

"Let's go back to the first green," she

said, "I want to putt."

given any average male player a thorough beating on the greens. From all distances and from all sorts of awkward curling lines

she put the ball dead or dropped it into the hole. At the end of half an hour I had lost nearly seven shill-

ings.
"This is too much,"
I said finally; "let us adjourn to the clubhouse, and while, sitting behind an urn of

Chinese beverage, you uphold an intelligent silence. I will tell you the story of the love-sick debtor, remarking to myself at the same time how beautiful you are. That's the advantage of being able to do two things at once."

"You really are an absurd person!" she laughed. "I'll play you double or quits from this end of the green, and then $ilde{ extbf{I}}' ext{ll come.''}$

"Done."

I laid my putt stone dead.

"Beat that, fair one," I said, "and I will pay for the tea as well."

She did. She holed it.

We had tea at the club-house, and wandered back to the hotel afterwards. When we reached it, Phyllis announced her



distance, and I judged that we should have a good hour before we were disturbed. Phyllis took out an iron of some sort, and started hitting innumerable balls perfectly straight down the course. She had a long, loose swing, very pretty to watch, and intention of resting before dinner. Delphine and Peter had not yet returned, so I wandered out again down to the seashore and idled away an hour or so. It was a lovely evening, more like June than April.

"Don't be a fool," I said to myself.
"Falling in love after all these flirtatious years? Rubbish!" Half angrily I flung

a pebble into the deep.

All thoughts of spring had left my mind abruptly, within ten minutes of my return to the hotel. I found Delphine, nearly in tears, sitting hopelessly on the end of the bed in her room. Peter, a frown on his usually impassive face, was standing with his back to the fireplace.

"This," he said, as I entered, "is a pretty thing to happen! I told her not to bring

the things, too!"

"Oh, don't rub it in," Delphine said softly. "I know I oughtn't to have! But I did, so that's that."

"Wouldn't even leave them in the

office!"

"It never occurred to me that they'd be stolen!"

I looked at her. "Your pearls?"

" Yes."

I did a little quick thinking.

"I'd better go and tell the manager, and the police," said Peter.

I stopped him.

"Peter—Delphine—will you leave this to me until bedtime to-night?"

They both stared at me.

"Jack dear," Delphine said, "what can you do?"

"Leave it to me, and don't ask questions!

Peter, give me this chance?"

"Are you mad?" he said gruffly. "What on earth are you going to do about it? You didn't take them by any chance, did you?"

I smiled.

"No," I said, "I don't deal in that sort of practical joke. But I've got an idea, and I should really like you both to trust me until eleven to-night. It's only four hours! That won't do much harm in any case. Make him, Delphine."

She hesitated.

"Peter, shall we?"

He laughed.

"All right," he said, "but I'm going to the office at 10.59 to-night, Jack."

"Thank you," I said.

After dinner, which was a strangely

cheerful meal in the circumstances, I inveigled Phyllis into the deserted writing-room.

"I've drawn you in the sweep, Phil dear,"

I said. "Mind you play well!"

"That'll be an extra incentive," she laughed. "I'll beat the English Riviera

Champion yet!"

"Of course you will. You will, then, in turn, dispose of the respective champions of Sussex, Essex, Wessex and Middlesex until you are finally the champion of your sex. Oh, sorry!"

She laughed.

"It came natural like, didn't it? Never mind, when you are the—what I've just said—don't forget that you will owe it all to me!"

"To you?"

"Your hearing," I said, "is perfect. To me. Why? Because of this. The incentive, the cause of which is my pecuniary interest in your progress, and secondly my help to you to-day."

"You were very good," she smiled. "I couldn't have got a better retriever even if I'd gone to the Kennel Club. Such a

gentle mouth too."

I nearly blushed.

"Ssh!" I said, "someone might hear. But you do realise you owe me something for my dog-like devotion?"

"I thought I'd paid that, in the bunker

at the----"

"Girl," I said severely, "control your thoughts! That was only the first instalment. Your debt will be paid in full after the thirty-first! Is that quite clear?"

"Er-yes."

"Well, I am going to give you a chance. I will commute this hanging burden of debt, if you will do something for me. Will you?"

"I never promise."

"Will you?"

"I never-"

"Tush! Will you?"

She smiled.

"All right."
"Good," I said. "Give me back Del-

phine's pearls."

She was on her feet in a flash. Standing there, the picture of outraged innocence, she looked perfectly lovely.

"How dare you?" she cried. "I never

took them!"

I smiled.
"Phil, dear," I said, "don't be silly.
Only three people knew about this robbery,

pocket.

suggested.

I got up.

I took them and put them away in my

"Shall we go back to the others?" I

'Leave me here for a little," she said.

"We can still be friends, can't we?"

"Of course," I answered.

and now you own that you did too. That's curious, isn't it? And also, if your fond father had arranged to come down, surely he'd have booked a room, wouldn't he? To be quite candid, that's what roused my interest in you at first. But there's a much more important side to the affair. Only I know that you've got them. It would have

She came close to me.

"I thought you were a fool," she said, her face very close to mine.

I laughed. I took her in my arms for one fleet moment.

She smiled at me.

"I'm not at all sure that I'm not right, after all!"

"'How dare you?' she cried. 'I never took them!"

been easy, wouldn't it, to have told the police and finished your golfing career for a few years. You see, you really do owe me them back!"

I watched her. She was, I thought, on the verge of tears. Suddenly she sat down. "Jack," she said, "I don't feel angry with you."

I laughed.

"My dear, nor do I! Be a good girl, and I'll say nothing more about it, not even to Peter and Delphine."

"All right. But you'll have to look the

other way.'

I smiled. Taking her left hand in mine, I turned away. There was a rustle of silk. Then she gave me a little pull.

"Here you are," she said.

Half an hour later, as I was sitting in the lounge and giving vague answers to the delighted Delphine and the amazed Peter, a waiter brought me a brown paper packet.

I opened it in some bewilderment.

"Hullo," said Peter, "where did you drop that?"

I was stupidly staring at my own note-case. Suddenly I opened it. About twenty pounds in treasury notes was missing, but a small piece of paper fluttered out.

Delphine seized it.

"I'm sorry, but I had to have my expenses," she read. "Jack, what on earth does this mean?"

I laughed.

"Anybody want to buy my ticket in the sweep?" I asked.

COURTING CONNIE WOODLAND

By EDEN PHILLPOTTS

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON

T first there's no doubt that Connie Woodland was a good bit interested when she found John Bent felt inclined her way. For John happened to be rather a remarkable young fellow, though not so wonderful as he thought he was. At five-and-twenty he stood in his father's shoes and was master of Cross Ways Farm and said to have very near a thousand pounds a year. And, as commonly happens in such cases, he took all the credit to himself and carried on very grand, as though him and not three generations of hard-working forbears had brought him to his fine position and large credit.

But barring youthful pride he was a Bent, and none feared that he lacked his father's sense and would not carry on very well and grow a trifle more humble and large-minded with years and the right wife. For the Bents were ever famous and fortunate in matrimony, and Fate, which had hit 'em here and there in every generation, like their poorer neighbours, never denied them the lasting luck that a good wife means.

As for John, his temper was the worst thing about him, and 'twas thought he'd got that through his mother's family, though not through her direct, for she was a peace-lover and quick at a soft answer. But her son chanced to be her only child and maybe had been spoiled and his natural faults not chastened to the full.

Jane Bent died untimely, when her boy was eighteen, and John Bent senior found the world a hollow mockery without her, and nobody minded less than him when he catched a fatal illness and went out of it seven years later.

So there was John, master of Cross Ways, and set on Connie Woodland.

None knew much about her, for her father was a foreigner from North Devon.

He'd drifted over to try his fortune down our way, at Bridestowe on Dartmoor edge, and hadn't been there above three or four years. He'd took up ground and made a bit of a nursery in the vale, and did pretty well with vegetables and small fruits and such-like; and Connie was a clever hand with poultry and used to attend Okehampton market with her mother.

Fair she was and eighteen years old, with light brown hair and grey eyes and a pretty mouth, but undecided. Tall and graceful and swift on her feet and making up into a very fine woman; but her character wasn't known, though the clever ones guessed it through her parents, who were both rather shadowy people with not much to them. Pleasant and easy by all accounts, but slight folk, whose opinion didn't matter. However, her beauty and her lovely grey eyes and fine, slim shape got hold upon Johnny Bent, and he bettered his acquaintance and began to reckon that Connie would be a very nice wife. He befriended her father in the matter of stable manure, and then May Woodland quickly saw which way the cat was jumping and dreamed a very great match for her child; and Job Woodland, her husband, who caught such opinions as he might be said to hold from May, also reckoned that Connie would soon be reigning at Cross Ways and the family name lifted a thought higher.

John carried things with a pretty high hand, but though one or two of his man friends hinted that he might look beyond Connie Woodland for a wife, they didn't better their friendship by so doing. For though love don't cast out pride as a rule, which be a very firm-seated vice when it grips a man, in honest truth young Bent never for an instant thought himself too good for Connie. He set her on a pedestal from the first and nothing about her was less than per-

fect. He loved her voice and her bird-like ways; he loved her whims and her sudden silences; and he loved her indecision and vagueness about things in general, holding that for such an uncertain creature his word would be law, which he wanted it to be with everybody about him.

And there's no doubt whatever that Connie, after she had got used to him, liked him very well also. His decision appealed to her vagueness and she found it a very easy and pleasant thing to take her mind to him and let him make it up for her. This he did do, until presently, much to her parents' surprise, she began to express opinions on various subjects and stick to them. In fact, John was strengthening her character—a good thing in its way; and though he didn't hurry to propose, the future was settled in his view, and Johnny knew, when he did say the word, she would jump at him.

So he took a good bit of secret satisfaction in the thought and dallied over his luck a long time and enjoyed the triumphant court-

ing.

Nine times out of ten he would have been safe enough, but with a character like that girl no man is safe until the ring's on her finger; and now a thing happened which opened young Bent's eyes to a very simple fact that only experience generally teaches us.

If he'd offered for her a month before he did so, he'd have got her; but he put it off and off, conscious of safety, and when, at last, he did propose, he didn't get her, which larned Master Johnny that Providence gives at her time, not ours; and if you refuse her friendship when 'tis offered, then you may live to find the appointed hour don't come round again.

You see a lot can happen to a girl's heart in a month, or in five minutes for that matter, and now a thing overtook Connie Woodland that made her terrible uncertain about the course of true love, and so on. It never took much at the best of times to make her uncertain, for her mind was a light weather-vane to her thoughts on most subjects; and now, unknown to her family, or her lover either, a stranger man suddenly lifted himself up in her life; and that was quite enough for chaos to set in upon Connie.

You must know that up above Bridestowe, in mid-moor behind Great Lynx Tor, was a famous peat factory, and though out of work at that time and waiting for money and hopeful people to set it going again, a caretaker went there daily to cast his eyes round the empty chambers and keep the machinery

from rusting away and so on. And when Mr. Friend died, a new caretaker was found and the man's name was George Punchard. From up-country he came and boarded with a Bridestowe widow; and he was a tall, young, flaxen fashion of a man, very good to look at and so strong as a giant.

George, he met Connie on a day when she'd gone picking bilberries 'pon the moors, for she loved in early autumn to wander upalong all by herself and gather a basket of wild fruit for market, and so take her pleasure with profit; for bilberries fetched eighteenpence a quart, and so was worth picking. And Punchard, coming down from Great Lynx, fell in with her. He'd seen her once or twice, but didn't know her and was glad of the chance to get acquaint. looked in each other's faces, no doubt, and her misty grey eyes took his fancy very quick, and the wavering, musical voice of her; and she saw a fine gert fellow, six foot three inches tall, and strong as a tree, with a cleanshaven face, curly lint-coloured hair and eyes as blue as a jackdaw's. He said he was a stranger and the new guardian of the peat works under Ammicombe Hill; and then he axed her the names of a few places round about, and she pointed out Tavy Cleeve and Hunter's Farm away in Tavy Valley, and other spots of interest. And then, as they was both bound downhill from the heights. he must carry her full basket and she must chide him for eating the berries out of it as he travelled along.

'Twas a case of understanding and native sympathy of mind breeding interest and pointing one way; and the man, heartwhole till that moment and fancy free, found himself so wondrous drawn to Connie that he forgot his manners before they parted and axed when she might be up over again. But, as for her, the question by no means shocked her, for she hadn't had time to think what she was doing yet, and she liked him and thought him a wondrous fine piece with a merry heart and no great opinion of himself. In fact, he came as such a proper contrast to John Bent, that she found him a refreshing creature, for contrast be a thing that human nature craves, and 'tis the natural hunger for a bit of contrast that makes half the trouble between men and women in the 'Tis just the sort of changes a doctor dursn't prescribe that would do such a lot of people good.

Connie said she ordained to be on the moors picking bilberries o' Monday next, and he hoped the day would be fine and so left her, thanking her very much for her company. And that began it.

In a fortnight George was tail overhead in love and Connie deep in doubt, the result of which appeared when the master of Cross Ways at last put the question and offered to wed her when she was minded.

Even then all might have gone well, but unfortunately John was in a lordly mood that day and the way he offered to wed her somehow didn't suit Connie. You see she had got in the atmosphere of the other man by now, and the contrast hit her most forcible when John axed for marriage, as though the advantage and glory were all on her side, the giving all on his. And, since a loophole happened to be what the girl always liked, and making up her mind a feat she hated to perform, she thanked young Bent and, to his undying amazement, promised she'd turn it over

"Turn it over?" he said. "Hell! What d'you want to turn it over for? You've known it was coming any time this six months; and if you didn't, everybody else did."

She stung his pride, you see, and from merely wanting her, he fired up from that day forth and was fixed as death to get her. A clever woman might have treated him so, just to whet his appetite and wake a fierce fire in him and teach him you can't get much worth having for the asking; but there was no such thought in Connie's head. She merely found herself, as usual, in two minds, and his way of offering for her had not done the trick but left her more doubtful than ever. She liked him very well indeed of course; but there it was: she weren't in no mood that day to speak the word, from which her conscience told her there could be no going back. And so he left her in a temper he weren't at any pains to hide, and she found herself wondering how George Punchard would pop the question if ever he came to it. Connie knew, of course, that George found himself terrible addicted to her by now.

And presently the wilful creature, going her way between 'em, made a serious and trouble-some discovery, for she found, when along with John, she hankered for the mild and friendly courting of George; and when in George's company, she rather liked the thought of Johnny's more masterful ways.

For Bent wanted her worse than ever now

and soon made it up and hid his heart and was at her most steadfast to say "yes" and name the day; while George, for his part, brought her a present one Sunday afternoon, and being already well thought of in Bridestowe, Connie's mother, May Woodland, asked him to stop to tea.



"'.' Tis a very fine thing to be free, though you people may be too old to remember how it felt.'"

Of course May little guessed what was afoot and didn't know that John Bent had already asked Connie to wed him and been postponed. And it wasn't till Punchard actually offered himself for the girl, that the situation got to be unfolded in the public ear.

There's no doubt that Connie liked the way

George put it a lot better than the way John had, and she found herself by now a lot drawn to the big man and very happy in his company; but when the storm burst and he said, though not worthy to tie her shoe-string, yet he didn't see how he was going to live his life without her and so on. Connie found herself

And then, though a task foreign to their natures, Job and May Woodland felt that it was up to them to make up their daughter's mind for her in double quick time.

So when Punchard came before her father and hoped he'd be on his side and incline Connie towards him, and mentioned his



torn in half betwixt 'em and felt that faithlessness to John would be a sort of crime, whereas to say "no" to George looked to be quite beyond her power.

So she told Punchard 'twould take her a deal of thinking over, afore she could make up her mind on such a tremendous question. After that the fat was in the fire and her parents got to hear of the adventure—not through her, but George Punchard himself.

prospects and future hopes, all he heard was that Connie had been so good as tokened to young farmer Bent for months and weren't in the market for him, or any other man. But later, when her father set on to Connie herself, she fired up and told him she was not tokened to John, nor yet to George, but in two minds and holding the balance evenly between 'em. He raged against her, of course, and so did her mother; but they

only found, as cleverer people than them have, that there's nought so obstinate on earth as a woman without any character of her own.

"There's nought like delay," said Connie, "and I be going to delay, so now then! I like 'em both. They're very fine, honest men, and there's a lot about John I admire tremendous and a lot about George as suits me very well. And I can't have both, so I be going to look into it and take my time."

"And end by having neither," said Job

Woodland.

"And end by doing your duty I should hope," declared May. "You be so good as fixed to Mr. Bent and your duty is there, and Heaven knows you'll make us a laughing-stock in Bridestowe if there's any more wickedness."

But Connie was in one of her saucy moods and laughed at 'em.

"I'd like John for weekdays, and George for Sundays and Bank Holidays," she told 'em, "and whether or no, I'll bide a thought yet."

"And bring our grey hairs with sorrow to

the grave," said her father.

"Your hair ban't grey, dad," she replied, "and it won't be grey no faster for me. 'Tis a very fine thing to be free, though you people may be too old to remember how it felt."

But she weren't free long, because, when Mrs. Woodland next met John Bent, she had a tidy tell with him and knew he wouldn't let no grass grow under his feet. And more he didn't. He saw Connie first, being deeper in love with her than ever by now; and no doubt if he'd struck the right note, he'd have got her sorrowing in his arms for good; but 'twas John's misfortune never to be very clever along with Connie, nor yet suit his speech to her frame of mind. He couldn't be humble and throw himself on her heart, but always took the lord-and-master line and blustered a bit. So when he commanded and dared instead of entreating and coaxing, he lost ground.

"'Tis this way, John," she told him in her voice like a wood-dove cooing. "I'm very fond of you indeed, and well I know you'd make a fine husband for any girl; but marriage is a big order, John, and I wouldn't come to you unless I felt dead certain I was

the right one."

"I've said you are the right one and that's

enough," vowed Bent.

"Not for me," she answered. "You think I'm the right one; and so do George

Punchard think I'm the right one. But how do I know you're not both mistook?"

"And who the devil is George Punchard to think about you anyway?" he asked, the

flickets flaming in his cheeks.

"He's the caretaker of the peat works, John," she replied, "and I like him, too. He's a very fine man, as you may have noticed, and good as gold and well thought upon. And these things will happen, Johnny. I've got to know him pretty well and find him a chap that suits me. In fact, you both suit me, and I want time and I will have time. We're all young and 'twould be a thousand pities if us was to make a mistake."

"You'll marry me, or you'll marry no man, by Heaven!" swore the farmer. "You've said 'yes' a hundred times, all but the word, and you know at the bottom of your heart, if you've got one, that you meant to marry me long since."

"I did, John," she admitted. "And for a good few things, especially my parents, I'd much like to do so; but this here man have

come in my life."

"If you don't put him out of your life, then, I will—mark me," he said in deadly earnest

"Oh my!" cried Connie. "Don't you do anything rough, John. He's six feet three, and as hard as moor-stone and amazing strong. But he's kindness made alive and so honest and straight as yourself."

"He's thrust in between us," he said, "and the man that comes between me and what I want most on earth will go down,

hard as moor-stone or not!"

"I'll hope for the best then," she answered him, "and if there's any bad blood, or illconvenience like that, it might be a clever thing if I wasn't to marry neither of you."

"You'll marry me," he told her again, "and that's as sure as the sun's in the

sky."

"'Tis wonderful to have such will-power as yours, John," she replied to the man; and then she left him and walked away a good deal put about. In fact, she wetted her pillow with tears that night, and thought on drowning herself in the Lyd river; but then she got wondering what it would be like when John met George, and wished she might be there to see and read their characters. And then she calmed down and sighed gently to herself a few times, and then she went to sleep.

And a bit after that, riding over the moor past Ammicombe Hill to look after some of his ponies running there, John Bent fell in with George Punchard.

'Twas an early winter that year, and though only mid-November the frost was about and the first snow had fallen.

The men knew one another by sight very well, but hadn't spoke, and when John reined in his hoss and began, George, who was just setting out for home, advised they should travel along together while they talked.

"You can go quicker than me, and the dusk be coming down, and we're both bound

for Bridestowe," he said.

Then Bent began on him most ferocious, and Punchard, who like a lot of very strong men was very good-natured, listened as he

swung along beside the other.

"I want you to understand once for all that you're a blasted interloper in the matter of Miss Woodland," began Johnny. "And, if you've got the sense of a sheep, you might have found out that when you came here. I'd looked on the girl and won her before ever you was thought of. And so it is: and I order you to grasp home that I won't be withstood in this matter by you or any living man. Him as comes between me and her be going to reap the consequences, and nought's too bad for such a blackguard, because he's seeking to take what isn't his'n. So I bid you sheer off in that quarter from this hour, else you'll get a lot more than the rough edge of my tongue."

George nodded very thoughtful and sized up the angry man. He was a bit older than John and had seen a lot more life.

"I'd be very sorry to come between a man and his promised wife," he answered. "In fact, I should be the blackguard you think if I done that; but I see you ain't too clear as to the facts, else you wouldn't let yourself be so saucy. So far as I learn from her own lips, Connie Woodland have never said 'yes' to you, or if she have, she don't remember it. And I take her word in that matter. thinks well of you, no doubt, and don't hide it. She thinks better of you than I do in fact; but she's got a heart kind enough to think well of everybody. She thinks well of me also for that matter, and has told you so, I understand. She may also think well of other chaps besides us. Why not? The point for you to remember, Mr. Bent, is this: she's free. She never has said she was going to marry you. And, that being so, until she's decided, I've got as much right to try and make her marry me as any other man. I'm all straightforward, I assure you. I don't drag nobody else in. I want her, and who

wouldn't? And I don't grant no reason why for I shouldn't make love to the woman so long as she's pleased to let me."

"Then you're dead to reason," answered the other," -dead to reason and decency You know this-that if you hadn't thrust in upon her and traded on her uncertain mind and interested her with yourself, she'd have taken me by now. She was as good as tokened, and if she didn't tell you so,

more shame to her."

"She certainly didn't think so," answered George. "She's a very honourable piece, though a bit vague at making up her mind as you say; but I'm quite sure that if she'd held herself promised to you, she would have mentioned it and I'd have shut up. The trouble is that you took her for granted and now find yourself a good bit vexed you was mistook. You never can take a girl for granted till she says 'yes,' and not always then. Anyway, you had a pretty good start on her. You've offered three times by all accounts and I've only offered once; and so far she's turned us both down. And I'm going on at her like a house afire, and no doubt you'll do the same—and devil take the hindmost as they say. But why for you should want to pick a quarrel with me I can't see. I be only doing what you done; and such a conceited chap as you ought to be proud to see others following your lead."

Johnny had an uneasy idea, then, that t'other was poking fun at him-a thing he'd

take from no man.

"You've heard me, that's all that matters," he said, "and I don't waste no time hearing you, because what you say don't matter. You're up against a man, though you don't seem to know it-a man who's used to have his own way in these parts and ain't going to peddle words with a foreigner from Heaven knows where. Keep off that girl—that's all there is to it—and if you don't, you'll rue it—and mighty quickly."

He gave his hoss the reins and was gone, not waiting for an answer to his threats; and George looked after him very interested through the winter gloaming. He didn't feel a spark of wrath. He only felt his thoughts turn to Connie, and, being a large-minded fashion of man, he quite saw that John Bent might please a woman very In fact, he rather liked John himself.

"There's a lot in him to please Connie, I'm sure," thought George. "He'd be a very good husband for a girl whose mind have got

to be in another's keeping."

Yet, without bias, he felt the young woman

was like to live comfortabler with him than

"'Twill be very interesting to see how it goes, but I'll have to do my darndest without a doubt to win the creature," thought George on his homeward way. He meant to fight. and he also meant to fight fair, being that sort of man.

And while he left no stone unturned to capture her, no more did John. 'Twas a great battle, as all allowed, and Bridestowe people, being pretty clever, kept out of it most careful and watched; though as for Connie's parents, they was steadfast, of course, on young Bent's side. The girl took a leaf out of George's book after her next talk with him, and he advised her to bide so calm as she knew how and devote her mind to the task without no prejudice on either He told her all about his meeting with Johnny and said there was a good deal about John that he admired. In fact, he pointed out a virtue or two that Connie had overlooked, and never once did he say a hard or mean word against his rival. And she noted that in his favour. And there was refreshing contrasts again for her, because John didn't see nothing whatever to admire in George, but quite the contrary. In fact, he gave George a shocking bad character to everybody, Connie included, and wondered all up and down the parish how a decent person could speak to a man no better than a thief. And he said in a full bar at the "Dog and Gun" that the chap who would steal another man's future wife would steal anything. In truth he was very libellous about George, and some didn't hesitate to tell him so; but Connie always listened to him and paid respectful attention to his views and never crossed his opinions, nor yet argued. And along with George, she listened, too, and liked to hear him pat John on the back, and say he'd outgrow his boyish bad temper and make a very fine man some day, when life had mellowed him and he'd got to know a bit more about reality.

So it drifted until the crash came, for nature won't stand still, and it moved a bit faster with Johnny than the others, by virtue

of his fiery disposition.

'Twas borne in upon him after a month that he was losing ground, though he was not in truth; but a false fear woke up in him and he took a wrong turn. He grew to hate George most furious, and the cooler Punchard kept, the hotter Bent became. And while he was brooding on his troubles, the devil got to Johnny's elbow. There wasn't none to advise him, or put the thing from the right angle, and no doubt Connie did fret him pretty cruel by her shilly-shally attitude; but when he once heard her tell how George had praised him, that was oil to the flame and John forgot his fame and good record and sank to the level of a natural animal fighting another male for his mate.

He lost his reason for a bit and itched to smite; and passion so mangled the man that even his pride couldn't conquer it. And there came a day with snow and a cold north wind on the moor, when the fierce weather touched him and he mounted his hoss and set out for the peat works intending to bar George's way home, and stop him miles out in the lone moor. And if he left t'other for dead it weren't going to trouble Johnny. "So long as there be two to choose from; she'll bide single," he thought.

He took a drink afore he started, and then he took another, and there was a few in the "Dog and Gun" bar at the time, and a chap, as didn't like John very much, ventured to make a sly jest about Connie Woodland. 'Twasn't for his ear, of course, but he heard it and he turned on them and gave 'em a glimpse into his mind. He told 'em he was off that instant moment to beard George Punchard and hide him till he yowled for

"There's some fools," he said, "don't know a man when they see one. I'll show 'em. A knave be generally a coward; but coward or no, that man won't have a whole skin when he comes back to-night-if ever he does come."

And they all praised John for his valour and wished they was going to be there to see the fun; but none felt no great fear for George, because he was three stone heavier than farmer and had no small fame in the

way of rough sports.

One, however, better read in human nature, feared danger, for he'd seen Satan looking out of John's eye. Old Cousins it was, and he knew Bent was going to fight to the death; and whether he conquered or whether he did not, Cousins didn't reckon much good would come of it.

And going home, chewing on his doubts and half in a mind to walk to the policestation, the old man chanced to mark Connie Woodland mooning along looking in the shops, where the Christmas gimcracks was set out to tempt the people. And Cousins stopped her and told her that John Bent was riding up to the peat works that instant moment to larrop George Punchard with his hoss-whip; and he swore 'twas all her fault, and if murder was to come of it, her hands would be the red ones. And then he went his

way, satisfied he'd done well.

'Twas a fearful shock to Connie; but for once she didn't catch herself in two minds. and, looking back long after, she always said it was the only time in her life she ever acted on the spur of the moment. And no doubt that was true. But so soon as ever the fatal news sank into her head, she was off like an arrow for the moor, and she never travelled so fast in her life before. So there it was-George finishing up at the peat works and locking the door of the engine-house, and John riding up the tram-lines with his eyes open waiting to sight his enemy, and Connie panting along by the river Lyd in fear and trembling, hopeful to stop trouble, but without an idea in her head how she was going to do it. But she ran nearly three miles behind Johnny and the affair had finished more'n half an hour before she got on the scene.

The clash happened very quick and absolutely different in every way from what you'd expect—as such things generally do. John at last saw Punchard—a spot on the snow striding down beside the river, which was easier than the tram-lines, where drifts had blocked the way in places. So Bent, he lighted off his hoss, made it fast and went down over the heath to tackle his enemy.

They met one on each side of Lyd, and, in half a minute, stood face to face on two great rocks a yard apart with the river rolling down in a fall between 'em. And George listened while John cussed him. And all the farmer's passion burst out of him on that great, huge moor, till you might have thought he'd got enough anger to fill the place. Like two black spots they were in the midst of fields of white, and over their heads on hill-top towered Great Lynx, and the stream opened into a little pool beneath them. George, he listened, and seeing the other man's dreadful rage, watched him very close, for John was twitching with his pent-up fury, and finding himself within reach of the enemy he hated worse on earth, he forgot all about fair fighting but just let himself go and suddenly, in the flood of his talk, lashed out his great hoss-whip from the thong end. heavy buckthorn handle and he was just in distance, and the thing whirled round with all his might and all his rage behind the stroke. He'd guided it true also and it was bound for just above George's left ear, and so sure as it got home, it would have broke his head bones like an egg-shell. But luckily

for John and himself, t'other man was far too watchful to be murdered like that. never took his eve off the furious farmer's. and he guessed by the way Johnny's sword arm played, what he might do any moment, and so soon as the great blow started on the swing, George, very quick on his feet for a big man, was back out of danger with his head up. Even so the whip handle wanged through the air but three inches from his nose; but he was safe. All that volume of energy, however, had to go somewhere, and it did. stroke, with nought to meet it, took Johnny off his feet, and the rock was slippery with ice, and he lost his balance. Then, putting down his foot hard, to steady himself against falling, he missed the stone altogether and fell lumpus into the water below. That would have mattered nought, but as luck chanced, he dropped with his thigh on a rock six inches above the pool, and there was a pretty sharp crack; and if you've heard a big bone break in a man you may call home the sound.

Both knew what had happened in a moment, and, as John dropped off the rock into the water, he mentioned it. But there's nothing calms you down quicker than breaking your leg, and when he spoke, his anger

had already begun to die.

"I've broke my thigh!" he gurgled out. T'other was a lot interested, and he jumped down from his rock like a flash of lightning and had his arms round Johnny and lifted him out so tender as he knew how.

"Sooner 'twas your leg than my head, farmer," he said; "but you can be hopeful. 'Twas a clean break by the sound, and I'll travel so swift as I know how to get a hurdle to you and a man or two. Leave it to me."

John groaned and then he bit on the bullet and shut his mouth and let Punchard minister to him. He went fainty for a bit, and when he come to, he found he was carried under a bank to the lew of the wind. Then he heard George asking him a question.

"Where's your hoss?" he said.

"On the tram-lines tethered to the hedge," murmured John.

"Very well then. Hunter's Farm be the nearest place and that's five mile I fear. But I'll get there so quick as he can take me and have a few chaps up and something to carry you down on so quick as I know how."

"Thank you." said John.

Then t'other did a kindly thing, for he was a thoughtful manner of man for his years.

"I'll slip off your wet jacket now," he said, "for you'll keep in the heat better without it."

He felt the wounded man over when it was off and found his waistcoat wet also; but his shirt was dry, for he hadn't been in the water more than twenty seconds.

So George took his own coat and waistcoat off his body and put 'em on t'other.

"I shan't take no hurt on your hoss," he

five minutes later he saw the big man on his own big hoss making a line for Hunter's Farm, so well as the rocky ground and snow would let him.

Then John Bent set his teeth and thought his thoughts, and guessed round about an hour must go at shortest before he could



"'And he's on my hoss this minute gone for help."

said, "but it may mean the difference of life or death to you if you bide warm."

"Thank you," answered John again; and

be picked up; for Hunter's was a long way off for a man in a hurry. 'Tis a neck of arable land beside Tavy river and runs up

into the heart of the moor to the house, where it stands under a knoll of beech and sycamore.

Then, when the dimpsey fell, a panting

voice full of woe, "too late-too late!" "Yes," he answered, "the likes of you be always too late. You'll be too late at Judgment."

"At that Connie found her soul go out to John

She was for running to get help, but he said that help would soon be on the way, and then, for some queer mood, he made a clean breast of it and related everything. And he told nought but the truth neither.

"I came to break his neck," he said, "and, but for his cleverness, he'd be dead this I faced minute. him man to man and I swung my stock, and if it had got home, his skull would have been broke in; but he saw it coming and I missed him and slipped my foot and fell on a rock and broke my leg. And he forgave me, well knowing, no doubt, that I was

in the right to have his life if I could. And he didn't think no worse of me, but pulled me out instanter and brought me here and gave me his coat. And he's on my hoss this minute gone for help."

At that Connie found her soul go out to John and she admired him something tremendous. And her heart was care-free also, for thankfulness that no great fatal

harm had over-got either man.

"There's many would have lied about it," she said, "and I think the world of you, Johnny, for telling me the truth! And I'm thankful to God there's no blood shed, nor nothing done that won't be mended pretty quick. And I wish I was so brave as you.'

"Give me my pipe out of yon coat and don't chitter," he said. And she fetched his

maid struggled through the snow up past John Bent, and he saw Connie Woodland. She hastened not fifty yards away from him, and she lifted up her voice now and again; and if she'd called to Punchard, he'd not have answered; but she cried out "Johnny! Johnny!" so mournful as a curlew, and he shouted out where he was, and she soon fluttered down beside him.

and she admired him something tremendous.'

"Oh, my God!" she murmured, her

pipe and loaded it and fired a good few matches out of the wet box till one burned

up and let the man smoke.

He bade her go, but she wouldn't leave him and was full of admiration for him and his wonderful pluck. And such was her power to touch him that he felt at peace after she'd been there half an hour, and pretty sure in his mind that all danger was now passed for evermore and the woman won.

She was still praising him when George came back with four more chaps. And a hurdle was carried over the hoss's back. They'd brought a blanket or two and a cushion and a flask of pretty stiff brandy and water. And George made John drink the lot afore they lifted him on the hurdle; because that was like to hurt him pretty sharp. Tom Blee of Hunter's Farm had come himself, and he was forty-five year old and a man of wisdom. So he took the lead and they soon packed John so comfortable as could be and set off in the last of the gloaming for Bridestowe.

George went ahead with the hoss and Connie ran forward to him presently with a message from Tom Blee. And being out of earshot, he ventured to ask her how she came on the scene. But she wanted to hear his tale, not unfold hers, and prayed him to

tell her what had fallen out.

"Tell me truth," she said, "or I won't

never forgive you, George."

"An accident—that's all," he answered, "and lucky I was by. You see, just after I'd met Johnny, who'd 'lighted off his hoss to have a word, the poor man slipped on a frozen stone, as anybody might, and dropped down on to another a good few feet lower. And he's broke his pin bone I'm fearing. But being there, I was able to fetch him out of the water in a moment, and I rigged him up so snug as I could, and rode off for help on his hoss."

She panted with admiration, Connie did, for it seemed a wondrous fine thing in her opinion that George shouldn't throw no blame.

"There's many would have told the truth about it," she said, "and I think the world of you, George, for telling me a lie! I know what really happened from John himself; and only you would have hid it; and

Farmer Blee bids you to get on the hoss and gallop forward to Doctor Smeaton. Then he'll be up at Cross Ways so soon as they get John home, if not sooner."

"A very clever thought," answered George, and he mounted and was off.

He went up to Bent's farm for his coat and waistcoat the next day; but he didn't see John, because the sufferer was asleep.

A week later Punchard heard he wasn't wanted at the peat works no more and his master had another job for him up-country. He told Connie Woodland that he was a goner and begged her to come with him, but she found herself in a proper quandary now, because she had promised Johnny most faithful to say "yes" or "no" inside a week. And the business of making up her mind in earnest was ageing the girl something terrible. So George, he gave her the address where he was going nigh Barnstaple, and then he said "good-bye" to her, and she wept all night after he was gone. three days later she took her father's pen and ink, and made up a letter. But she didn't write to George; she wrote to John and sang his praises and said the like of him was long ways too fine for the likes of her. And she posted the letter one evening at six o'clock, after the post was gone for that day, and, round about midnight, she went off to Barnstaple. 'Twas the most definite thing ever told of her; but it happened. She walked through the small hours to Okehampton, catched a train there and was got to Barnstaple and George by noon.

He found himself a good bit surprised and pleased about it; but he moved terrible quick for fear of accidents. In fact, he put up the banns next Sabbath morn, and they was married at the first possible moment, though neither believed it had actually happened till long after. Not till a year later did she come to see her parents, and May and Job forgave her and was pleased with her babe.

And John Bent sulked for two year, then he married the eldest daughter of Tom Blee, a girl that brought him beauty, no doubt, and was never in two minds in her life; but whether she be going to keep on the high tradition of the Bent wives, us shall know later.





Heaven knows how we'll live. But we'll manage somehow, and there'll always be enough for you."

WANTED-A REST **CURE**

By MADGE S. SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

T was still a secret. She had known it for a whole hour, and still it was a secret, Aunt Claudia's secret, who had never been known to keep such a thing five minutes. They kept on eating and eating, and talking about ordinary affairs, because they didn't even know that there was a secret. And the most delicious thing that had ever happened to Claudia Preece in the whole of a rather drab and uneventful life remained too delicious to be

All through tea she had hugged it, listening to their chatter, the dear girls, and thinking how they would open their eyes did she but let out what a change had come over her status and prospects, old Aunt Claudia, who had never been in all her days a person to count as anything interesting at all.

No, she wouldn't tell yet.

It was hard work not to blurt it out. When Jenny, dainty, fair-skinned, warmthloving Jenny, began to talk about a mannequin show she had been to, and the "simply gorgeous short sable jacket at Shadley's, that suited me down to the ground, but of course the price—" Aunt Claudia had it right on the tip of her tongue to announce: "Never mind the price. We'll buy it to-morrow, darling. It's the very present I had in view for you."

For imagine the joy of their round-eyed amazement! The incredulity. The delight when once convinced that she had not taken leave of her senses. Aunt Claudia, who had never had two sixpences to rub together, who had never earned a penny-piece in the whole of her Victorian life, Aunt Claudia to be talking about buying fur coats!

Aunt Claudia, who had been reduced to begging the crochet cotton from her dear nieces before she could make them crochet mats for birthday presents. Aunt Claudia with a banking account of her own, a chequebook, and a balance behind it! What sensation would be there!

But the great moment was not quite ripe for the disclosure.

No, she wouldn't tell just yet.

Not even when Dolly insisted on going out with that nasty chest cough to queue for a seat in the pit for "His Third Wife." When she advised Dolly not to go standing there in the damp, Dolly retorted with sarcasm—always very clever and sarcastic was Dolly, the brainy one of the family—"Perhaps you're thinking of treating us to stalls, then?" What fun it would have been to say: "By all means, my dear! Book your seats on the 'phone, and have a taxi too."

But she kept her peace.

Margery gave her a lead next. Little minx, with her mind always on the forbidden thing. Naughty Margery, causing all her people such anxiety. Aunt Claudia felt strongly that Margery's recent conduct put her beyond the pale of wild extravagance out of her wonderful legacy. At least, till she came to her senses and gave "that

fellow" up.

"Do you know what I wish, Claudie? I wish I could find a hundred pounds. Do you know what it feels like to want a huge sum of money like a hundred pounds? To want something absolutely beyond your reach? I want it desperately. I do believe if I saw a rich profiteeress hung with ropes of pearls I'd snatch one and make off with it. That's how I feel. It's horrid, a sort of sick, sinking, want-your-breakfast feel, and I've got it badly. And where could I ever get a hundred pounds? Why, I shouldn't even fetch it at auction with my clothes on." The other girls had gone out, be it under-Margery had shown all the signs of spending an evening in. She had drawn up her chair to the fire, bagged a fat heap of cushions, and lit Aunt Claudia a cigarette as an inducement to receive confidences. Strictly in private Aunt Claudia was not averse to a cigarette. She enjoyed confidences too, but she knew well around whom Margery's confidences were about to revolve. Of course it was going to be something about Dick Stebbing. Now it was generally admitted by all Margery's circle, of which Aunt Claudia was the eldest, though by no

means granted any semblance of authority on that account, that Dick Stebbing was not to be countenanced. The family did not approve of Dick. That a Preece should stoop to consider seriously what Aunt Claudia's generation quaintly called "attentions" from a young fellow who sold cheap motor-cars to small shopkeepers. and who was shameless enough to drive the cars publicly in the town on behalf of prospective purchasers, was "unthinkable." The whole family united in "swatting" Margery, the new generation's word, not Aunt Claudia's. Gentle Aunt Claudia, keeping house meekly for her lively nieces, year after year, never "swatted" anybody. But she shared the family disapproval of Margery's affair.

When the girl had been seen, and remarked upon, riding with Dick Stebbing in a sample car—a baker's delivery van, mind you, with the price up and the name on it—Aunt Claudia shed tears of mortification. Margery had been her favourite always. It was dreadful that Margery should so far

forget herself.

"No, I won't smoke, thanks," she said coldly. "I don't want to become a slave to the habit, though it certainly is rather nice." Over a slightly averted shoulder, she rejected the proffered cigarette.

"Oh, be comfy, do, Claudie! I want to talk. I've just got to tell somebody, or

bust. You see, it's Dick——"

"I guessed as much," returned Aunt

Claudia dryly.

"Oh, don't be stuffy. Why can't you try to see my-our point of view. You don't know Dick. I do. I'm the best person to judge. He's just the splendidest, pluckiest, unluckiest, dearest old boy in the whole world. Why, there isn't one of the boys we know fit to hold a candle to him. You can't deny that he's most awfully good-looking. He's made his own way in the world with absolutely nothing. He's educated himself. He just went to an ordinary elementary school, nobody ever spent anything on making a gentleman of him-and he's done it himself, all off his own bat. And now for want of a hundred pounds, he's to be beaten down. Oh, Claudie, if you know how I hate you when you raise your eyebrows! Dick is a gentleman -in everything that matters. I defy anybody-

"No doubt you are the best judge, Margery. I have scarcely spoken to the young man. But gentlemen don't as a rule deliver groceries at one's friends' back doors."

Margery said Aunt Claudie was a hopeless

"You'll be still more horrified to hear we're going to be married, whatever anybody says," quoth Margery defiantly. "We are old enough to know our own minds, and we are going to shape our own lives. Why should you and my sisters presume to rule my life, pray? I have nothing to expect from you, that I can see, and if I had, it would make no difference. I'd rather starve than knuckle under to the rest of you, just to go on living here, having my soul starved for the sake of a shelter and bread and butter. I'm not like you, Aunt Claudia, thank goodness! We shall be most awfully poor and most awfully happy. There's a room over the garage, jolly draughty, I dare say. We're going to camp up there. Yes, we are, in a room over a garage, with just a gas-ring and two deal chairs and a table. What a come-down for the haughty name of Preece! And I don't care! I don't care about anybody but Dick. I'd sooner have Dick in a garret than the finest house in Daneholm Road with anybody else, even if he were a millionaire."

Then Margery, after saying how happy

she was, began to sob forlornly.

"And I think the girls are simply pigs—absolutely pigs—that they won't lend me and Dick a hundred pounds—when they could perfectly well, and it wouldn't hurt them a bit—to save Dick from such a holy mess."

Aunt Claudia sat up very straight and

stopped her ears.

"No, Margery, I won't have it! I don't want to hear his name. You know we've all set our face against it from the start. I refuse to be made your confidant. I refuse—"

"Oh, can all that, Claudie! I'm only telling you for somebody to talk to. It doesn't matter how stuffy you are about it. Nobody dreams of you being any good in an emergency, because we all know you haven't a stiver. But you might try to be sympathetic. That wouldn't cost anything. Tell me where I can get a hundred pounds this week, if you want to be useful."

Aunt Claudia's heart gave a great, wild bound. It was a foolish, unconsidering

organ.

"A hundred pounds!" she was aching to say. "And is that all? Light the

gas, my dear, and dry your eyes, and I will

give you a cheque."

Transports of joy. Gratitude, hugs. But no! Steady. It would be helping Margery on the road to ruin. What! Use her wonderful windfall to help wayward Margery on her course of disobedience? That would be helping her to sorrow.

Not a word! Trouble in store for that impertinent Dick would probably mean that the whole undesirable affair would come to

an end.

The delicious secret was to be a secret a

little longer.

"It's the most horrible mess I ever heard of. I don't know what will be the end of it. But we're going to be married first. First, do you hear? Before the trouble gets worse. They are talking about prosecuting Dick. Of course it was entirely the other driver's fault, and if Dick hadn't been simply splendid and heroic, somebody'd have been killed. But all the wretched company care about is their miserable car, and they mean to make him pay for it. If he doesn't, I don't know what we shall do. They may send him to gaol, p'r'aps. In any case, he'll lose his job."

"Oh, you must be mad. Talking of marrying a man with a tangle like that hanging over him. It's wickedness. I

won't listen."

"No, I'm not mad. I'm just in love—in love with Dick." Margery looked Aunt Claudia very straight between the eyes, and added: "I'm the one of us that won't wait. Don't make any mistake. Dick thought we ought to put it off. And I won't. I'm going to barge right in and share all his trouble with him, and we'll have our good times after. We can be happy through anything."

She tossed back her curls in defiance.

Margery defiant was the most engaging creature imaginable. Aunt Claudia rubbed her eyes and her nose.

"You know it's very wicked to tell me all this. I've set my face against it. I disapprove very strongly. And I ought not to be upset. This sort of thing is very upsetting. You'll be sorry one day."

"Oh, how selfish old folks are!" cried Margery. "Life and death to Dick and me, and all you care about is whether you

are upset."

Suddenly her warm young cheek was rubbing Aunt Claudia's like an affectionate kitten.

"Don't be stuffy, Claudie! Wish us luck.

You're only being stuffy because you think it's up to you."

"You've always been my favourite,"

Aunt Claudia yielded weakly.

And then she broke off abruptly to cry aloud. It was amazing. Aunt Claudia, never seen to cry, buried her face in her hands. Great tears fell between her cold fingers. She was sobbing like a child that is hurt and frightened, and more frightened than hurt. The sound was terrifying to Margery.

She flung her arms around her aunt, and begged her to tell what was troubling her so.

But Aunt Claudia pulled herself together. She said she was upset. She would go to

"And it's all my fault, upsetting you. Selfish wretch I am," Margery reproached secret that was there before the new delightful secret came.

A horrible secret! She had tried to forget it. Tried to solace herself with thinking: "Perhaps it will never happen again!"

And here it was, threatening her, mocking her in her hour of elation, worse than ever, horrid reality of the ghost of fear that had haunted her since that last time.

That pain— Her legacy— That pain— Even tho' the pain was gone for the time, lying there in the dark with thoughts, she knew the memory of that pain was in front of the legacy, effacing it.

Yes, though the pain was gone, and she was trying to picture Jenny's glowing colour over rich sables. Yes, it would run to the sables. Jenny all smiles and love—Dolly's delight to hear she was to have



"Her story petered out. She felt she was talking apologetically, feebly. 'You girls won't mind taking care of me?

Making a fuss of me for a change?'"

herself. Aunt Claudia was bolted in her room when Margery went up to offer hot bottles and make other well-meant suggestions.

and make other well-meant suggestions.

That pain—— Oh yes, thank goodness it was gone for the present. She had been alone when it came before—had been able to keep it to herself altogether, her other

those expensive music-lessons she had set her heart on—— No good. The fear of the pain was predominant.

To-morrow she would see the doctor. Since last time she had been trying to bring her courage to the sticking-point. Yes, she would see Doctor Melwick. An

old family friend too. He would tell her. He wouldn't mince matters—he would tell her the truth. The truth, that was what

she wanted. And her secret-her nice secret-yes, she would keep that a little longer. Not spoil it - spoil the girls'

with this other thing, this pain that had frightened the very soul of her.

Next afternoon Claudia went home in a

Fancy her taking it easy! She didn't know how, but she must learn. Aunt Claudia taking it easy! She who had always jumped up to do other people's



but it was a special occasion, and he had said she must take things easy.

Yes, it was done. All right, after all, or not nearly so bad as it might have been. What a load off her mind! What had she not feared? Oh, horrid fears! And now it was all gone. Just six months of rest. Why, it was nothing to be unhappy about. She was to rest—take it easy.

errands, to see to other people's comfort. She had nursed others often enough. All of the trio of nieces had had many a spell of Aunt Claudia's kitchen comfort. Now they were going to nurse her. Nothing was necessary that the home could not provide, he had said. A month in bed. After that breakfast in bed—a sofa most of the day. Positively a pleasurable prospect. The girls waiting on her. A fire in her room. She could afford that luxury, and yes, she'd have a pretty dressing-gown. Warm and soft—she hated ripple cloth. It would be nice. She was tired—so tired.

As she stood on the step, getting her breath, she heard Jenny and Dolly arguing. They were quick-tempered, the dear girls. She rang. The maid was out. Ordinarily, remembering that, she would have gone round to the side door. But she was to be careful of herself. Jenny would come. Or Dolly. She heard them call to Margery.

"Margery! Open the door.

Claudie.

Margery must be out. Presently Jenny

came to open.

"Why couldn't you go round?" asked Jenny. She didn't wait for an answer. Aunt Claudia waited till after supper with her secret—her two secrets. Not the sort of thing to tell at table—her bad secret. And the other must come after.

"I went to Doctor Melwick this morning," she heard herself saying. It sounded like somebody outside herself. "Yes, about myself." She was all guilty blushes under their stares of amazement. Margery was not there, but Jenny and Dolly stared with all their eyes. "Yes, it does seem absurd. But he was very emphatic. He says I am ill. I shall be quite seriously ill if I don't take it in time. I have to lie up, and take life very easily. Breakfast in bed after the first month—I shan't be a great nuisance for long I hope-"

Her story petered out. She felt she was

talking apologetically, feebly.

"You girls won't mind taking care of me? Making a fuss of me for a change?" She ended with an uncomfortable little laugh. What was there to laugh at?

"You? Ill? But—you've always been

quite well."

"Oh, if you've been to old Melwick! A regular back number. Oh yes, an old scaremonger!"

"Not this time." Aunt Claudia shook

her head.

They looked in dumb They looked blank. horror at one another.

"Well, I suppose if you've got to go to bed, you'll have to go to bed," said Jenny.

"He's probably frightened her into think-

ing herself ill," said Dolly.

"There's Ivan Payne coming to stay next week," said Dolly slowly.

"Oh, I'd forgotten that!" Aunt Claudia cried penitently.

"And our fortnight in Switzerland," said

Jenny bitterly.

"Oh, well, if Auntie chooses to take to her bed for six months——"

"Not in bed all the time-" she protested weakly.

"Harriet will give notice."

"Everything will be rotten."

"Oh, everything will be simply knocked on the head. And our work-

"Yes, what about our work?"

They looked blankly at one another again. "A nice upset to all our plans, I must

"Without consulting anybody."

"Oh, bother everything," cried Dolly. "Auntie, it can't be done. You'll just have to think again, and not be ill. We just can't afford it.'

"But what am I to do?" she found her-

self pleading.

"Couldn't she be got in anywhere?" vaguely suggested Jenny. "A sort of nursing home? There are such places. You get recommends——"

"Not for people that aren't really very

ill," Dolly thought gloomily.
"We might pay something—I don't see where it's coming from, though," frowned Jenny. "Perhaps some of the cousins would subscribe. You see, Aunt Claudia has nothing of her own.'

"And you must see, Auntie, that in this flat, only one sitting-room—and with our work-

"That it's out of the question," finished Jenny with a snap of her well-shaped mouth. "If we are to have you here being waited on hand and foot-"

"To be sure, there are nursing homes," said Aunt Claudia in a dull level voice.

"Where you get the best of care," went on Jenny, "but the question is, where's the money coming from ? If you realised-"

"I shall see Doctor Melwick. He had no business to put the wind up her like this—all for nonsense, most likely," Dolly suggested.

Aunt Claudia could not hear the rest of it

for the thumping at her heart.

The legacy! Six months at a nursinghome—at four or five pounds a week—it would eat a big hole in it. And she needed so little. Just home care and kindness and freedom from worry, he had said.

"Hello, everybody!"

That was Margery, nonchalant of pose,

lighting a cigarette, trying not to look white and excited.

"Dick's here," said Margery. "I don't care whether you want him or not. He brought me home, and he's ravenous. He wants some supper. So do I."

By force of habit, Aunt Claudia migrated to the kitchen to see about some supper for the unwelcome one. She sat down in the old rocker—she had rocked Jenny in it—and cried weakly.

A nursing home! Nearly all the legacy

to go to a nursing home.

"Claudie! Old Claudie! What's all this

about-you?"

Here was Margery, cigarette thrown away, her warm cheek to Claudie's cold one. Margery's was wet. "Tell Margery. It isn't true? Are you really going to be ill? Where are you ill? But—a nursing home? No, no, Aunt Claudie! You shan't. If they're such pigs not to want to nurse you here, you come to Dick and me, dear!

There! The murder's out at last. We're married. Yes, we are! All on the sly, at eight o'clock this morning, without a word to anybody. We've only two tiny rooms over the garage. Heaven knows how we'll live. But we'll manage somehow, and there'll always be enough for you.

"Claudie, don't you remember when I had pneumonia? When you nursed me night and day—now it's going to be my turn to nurse you. I'll take care of you. It may be short commons—but Dick will worry through somehow. Won't you, Dick?"

They clung together. Their tears mingled. Dick's gruff voice was heard to say, indistinctly: "'Course we'll manage. Glad to have you, Aunt Claudia."

And Aunt Claudia's secret, the delicious secret that waited to be told, had to wait still a little longer.

Not yet could it be told, to trail the taint of a mercenary consideration across the fresh fragrance of unselfish love.



THE ANTIDOTE.

IF sorrow be
Awhile thy lot, O soul,
Seek not to read life's unread scroll,
Its mystery.

Put brooding by,

And find thee new delights
In comprehended sounds, scents, sights
Of world and sky.

The first spring breeze,
Hill waters, weirs in May,
June meadows, or a wild-rose way,
Or winter trees:

Or wold-top wheat,'
Or questing swallow's wings—
The visible things, O soul, the things
That are most sweet.

ERIC CHILMAN.

TALE OF A TUB

By CYNTHIA CORNWALLIS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE.

TOT have a bath?" echoed Henry in horrified amazement. "My dear Cynthia, you must be joking! You always did have a poor sense

Cynthia sighed, and shook her head.

"My poor Henry," she said, "I'm awfully sorry, but I'm not joking; I wish I were. But the cold fact is that the blessed gevser has gone and busted itself, and the bathroom's out of commission until the plumber can see to it."

"Woman!" raved Henry, "do you see my plight? Do you realise that I've played the last eight holes in a snowstorm, and walked home all those miles because I had no 'mac,' and was too wet and cold to risk hanging about waiting for the train? That I am footsore and weary. . . ."

"That's because you bagged my brogues to save cleaning your own this morning," growled Edward, "and crammed your

great, clodhopping feet into . . ."

"I had a train to catch," snapped Henry, "and this Simple Life stunt leaves one no time to do anything. I didn't want to wear. your rotten old brogues, but I simply had to, or lose the train."

He stood in the farm-house kitchen-living room dripping disconsolately, little pools forming round his feet on the red-tiled floor.

"You are making a mess!" complained

Cynthia.

"Making a mess? I should think so!" retorted Henry. "I'm dying before your eyes, only no one will realise it."

"Have a drink, old man," suggested

Edward soothingly.

"I want a bath, a hot bath," said Henry

obstinately.

"My dear, do be reasonable," begged Cynthia; "how can you have a bath if there isn't one?"

Henry peeled off his coat, and let it fall in a sodden heap on the floor.

"Isn't there a soup plate or a gravy dish, or anything I can wash in?" he pleaded. Cynthia was mopping up the floor.

"Of course," she said doubtfully; "there's the tin sort of tank in the scullery, and I believe old Mary had the copper lighted this afternoon to do some washing while we were out. I'll go and see what I can do."

She picked up the wet coat and left the

"Good Heavens!" said Henry, removing his mud-caked shoes. "What an existence! Call this a holiday?"

"Well, you needn't have come," said Edward unfeelingly from the depths of a comfortable chair. "You said you liked the idea of a simple life, and what can be simpler than washing in the scullery by the light of a single taper?".

Henry stood barefoot before the glowing

logs and steamed.

"You can't take off any more in here," remonstrated Doris from her corner of the settle by the open fireplace.

Henry deliberately removed his collar and

tie.

- "In moments of life and death," he remarked, "conventions go to the wall. Edward, fetch me a blanket like a good fellow."
- "There's quite a lot of nice hot water in the copper," said Cynthia cheerfully, emerging from the back premises. "I've put everything ready, so trot along and have

"What do I do?" inquired Henry.

- "Do?" echoed Cynthia. "Have a bath, of course!"
- "I mean what happens?" persisted Henry. "Do I stand in the soup tureen and pour the water over myself with a spoon, or

is the water spread out waiting to be sat in? I don't care much for either idea; I think I'll have a drink and wait till the plumber fellow turns up."

"That might not be for a week, or more," said Edward. "You'll have to tidy up a bit before then."

"It's very dark," objected Henry, peering into the obscurity of the scullery lit by a candle which wavered in the steam rising from the copper.

"There's all the light you want," replied Cynthia, with the air of a person who will stand no more nonsense. "Now don't stand



"You can't take off any more in here,' remonstrated Doris from her corner of the settle by the open fireplace. Henry deliberately removed his collar and tic. 'In moments of life and death,' he remarked, 'conventions go to the wall. Edward, fetch me a blanket like a good fellow.'"

"Don't be ridiculous, Henry!" said Cynthia crossly. "I've been to such a lot of trouble, and now that your beastly old bath is ready you've jolly well got to have it."

She took him firmly by the arm, and led him to the door in the corner.

about shivering, but hurry up and get back to the fire."

"Is there a towel?" asked Henry, still hesitating.

"Yes, everything you can possibly want," returned Cynthia, and pushed him through the door, shutting it and drawing the bolt.

She resumed her chair and picked up the book.

There was a sound of desultory splashing in the scullery, and then Henry's voice called complainingly:

"I say! there's no soap in this blinking

coal-cellar."

"Yes, there is," answered Cynthia. "I saw some on the shelf just beside you."

"Well, I don't see any," returned Henry peevishly. "What does it look like?"

"Soap!" retorted Cynthia. There was

a short silence.

"What sort of soap?" asked Henry again.

"Just a plain bar of soap," explained Cynthia patiently. "It's not toilet soap, but it'll do for once; I can't be bothered to fetch the stuff from upstairs. Hurry up, there's a dear!"

There was a pause.

"Has it got paper on it?" said Henry's voice doubtfully.

"Quite likely; it's a new piece," replied Cynthia.

There was another pause.

"Deuced funny soap!" complained Henry.

"Öh, shut up!" cried Edward.
"But I tell you," began Henry.

"Well, you needn't!" interrupted Edward; "we all know what soap is like.

Stop talking, and get a move on."

"There's something wrong!" shrieked Henry in a panic. "I've never felt so alloverish before! I believe I'm melting! Edward! for the love of Mike come and see what's wrong."

"What a fool the man is," said Doris, with pitying contempt.

"Help!" yelled Henry.

Edward sighed and went to the door: he opened it and looked in.

"Great Scot!" he cried, "what are you

doing, old thing?"

"Doing?" spluttered Henry. "What do you think I'm doing? Singing Grand Opera? Look at this filthy slime they tell me is soap! What does it look like to you?"

Edward looked puzzled, then he grinned. "Looks to me like Cynthia's housekeeping," he chuckled. "Odd, deuced odd! Are you sure it's soap you've got hold of?"

Doris suddenly threw down her knitting

and sprang to her feet.

"Oh!" she wailed, "I believe he's used the half-pound of farm butter we fetched this afternoon. I remember I left it on the shelf in the scullery."

"Has he left any for breakfast?" asked Cynthia in agitation. "Quick, Edward, go

and secure it!"

"I'm dashed if I do!" replied Edward.
"It's been melting in hot water, and it's all in a squelchy mess. By Jove! Henry, my lad, you do look a treat, 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' so to speak."

"Go to blazes!" yelled the exasperated Henry, becoming so blasphemous that

Edward hastily shut the door.

"Well, that's that," said Cynthia.

"And it was the best butter!" wailed Doris. "What fools men are!"



TRANQUILLITY.

THE tumult of the birds' last choir has died;
One lonely planet o'er the silence broods,
An owl calls faintly from the distant woods,
Earth stills her breath and waits for sleep, dim-eyed.

Their essences the failing hours release; Compassionate eve in last profusion lays Her balm on sorrowful, remembered days, And you and I walk hand in hand to peace.

DOROTHY ROGERS.

THE GIFT HOUSE

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

THE Hamlin Estate was one of those little affairs of which records accumulate in a tin box with name outside, a box opened at intervals by the solicitor in whose office it rests year after year. Such business involves little work and a small but secure profit. The Hamlin box had been in the office of Trask and Frimley for a matter of forty years, during which both Trask and Frimley passed on to a rest of which they had no real need, and the firm came into the hands of young John Fort.

Peter Hamlin, whose age Fort reckoned must be about seventy, remained in Australia during these forty years. He wrote home to Cobham every six months, short, dry letters, generally enclosing a bond or stock certificate to be put in the tin box. Trask and Frimley, as attorneys, collected his dividends, reinvested them, and several times in every year submitted offers to purchase the Hamlin house. This was a small Georgian place on the outskirts of the town. The offers were invariably declined, as was quite expected, but they made opportunity for a six-and-eightpenny item in the annual account for services rendered.

Everyone had forgotten old Peter except his two nephews, and their memories were merely the lively anticipation of possible benefits later on. But they never heard from him—not once. Then, very unexpectedly, there was handed in a letter to Trask and Frimley, and Fort, reading it, decided that the old man was becoming a shade more human. The letter arrived in March.

DEAR SIRS,-

About my house and my nephews. I'd like to do something for these two young men in a small way. So will you please have the house put in good order, and offer it to Mr. George Hamlin rent free for July, and to Mr. Michael for August, gardener included. As to the gardener, I want you to employ William Mockridge, by whom this letter will be given you. The garden may need a good

deal of work, so you can take him on at once at, say, three pounds a week, but less if you can arrange it. He has had a hard time out here, wants to get back to England and seems to know enough about flowers for the purpose. In case either of my nephews declines this offer, the other one might have the house for both months. I may want it later myself, as I am thinking of coming over. Meantime, please address me as usual. You will recognise my signature, but, anyway, a copy of this goes by post. I wanted Mockridge to get to work at once.

Yours faithfully.

Fort, reading this, was not much impressed. The thing sounded quixotic and rather small for an elderly unmarried man who had a good many thousands laid by. Then he had Mockridge brought in—small, very weatherbeaten, with cautious and rather anxious eyes, a large mouth, seamed skin, sloping shoulders and all the sign-marks of life in the open.

"You know what's in this letter?"

"I know the part about me, sir." The voice was harsh, as though the stringy throat of him had cracked.

"Did Mr. Hamlin make any definite promise about your wages?"

"No, sir, but three pounds a week was thought of."

"That's more than is paid here—with a cottage. You can have fifty shillings."

Mockridge twisted his gnarled fingers. "It isn't much, sir; but if it's all you'll give I'll have to take it."

"Very well. Mr. Hamlin wants you to begin at once. A tenant will probably arrive in June. Let me know to-morrow what you'll need in the way of tools. You'll have to work, mind you. The place has run to seed."

"I'll do my best, sir. And perhaps"—he hesitated—"you'll put in a good word for me with Mr. Hamlin."

"I will, if you justify it. Do you know the Wirraloo Ranch?"

"His place in Queensland-yes-I've worked there."

"Mr. Hamlin says he may be in England later this year."

"Yes, sir, he told me that too."

Young Fort would have liked to ask a good many questions about the exile, but it was too early in the game. "Well," he said, "I'll come round in a few days and see how you're getting on."

The door closed, and, taking down the tin box, he studied its contents for a while. The Hamlin Estate would realise something

over forty thousand at a minimum.

A day or two later, the confirmation of the old man's instructions arrived by post, and Fort dictated two letters, identical and very much to the point; and twenty-four hours after that George Hamlin strolled into his wife's room and tossed the one he had received on her dressing-table.

"Read that, old thing."

She put down her tongs and read, wrinkling a white brow and pouting not a little.

Heavens—what are you going to do?"

"Search me. I suppose we'll accept if we're wise." "In June-the very middle of the sea-

"I know when the season is."

"But, George, we can't! It's probably a poisonous place, and not fit to ask anyone to come to. We can't entertain there. Couldn't we send the children down, and work in a week-end ourselves for the look of the thing?"

He lit a cigarette and puffed gloomily. "I don't want it any more than you do, but we've got to think of the future. It's more hopeful than the past, and the old boy can't last much longer. If we mess this up it

might be expensive."

son?"

offer it to Michael? It's more in his line. And tell the lawyer man we're awfully sorry but we're all booked up—because we are?"

George wasn't quite comfortable about They saw each other very rarely, these brothers. George and his wife rode buoyantly on top of the wave while the money or credit lasted, while Michael and Mary lived in Ealing—where there was no wave. George was nothing in particular, while Michael was an analytical chemist, and worked very hard. George's wife had three thousand a year (between them they spent five), while Michael earned eight hundred and spent twenty pounds less. George was rather sparkling and did not look his forty years by at least ten, while Michael was greying at the temples, had tired eyes (too much microscopic work), stooped his shoulders and looked much older than he was. George had two children while Michael had four. And the rest of the comparison you may complete for yourself.

"I believe this is a sort of try-out,"

George announced reflectively.

"Who's the judge? He's in Australia himself."

"It's a wild guess, but I feel that way.

What about the gardener?"

"Ridiculous! If your uncle's as close as he seems to have been since you were born, he wouldn't leave anything to a gardener to decide."

"Then why does he supply one?"

"He couldn't let the place at all without one." She puckered a pair of very red lips, and gave herself up to thought. "I've got The lawyer man says that if you don't accept he's to offer the whole to Michael. Well, you write him and say that while we'd love to come, we really feel that Michael should have it because he needs it more. You needn't mention our engagements. If it's put in the right way it ought to make an awfully good impression. You'll score like anything, and Mike will think no end of you too. I heard from Sally Pender this morning, and she wants us for the second week-end in July, and it fits just right. Now toddle—I've a lot to do to my face yet."

George toddled, and after destroying much expensive notepaper produced a very creditable epistle saturated with generosity and brotherly affection. He read it to Betty, who highly approved. Then he dropped it in the pillar-box and telephoned

for the car.

She pondered a moment. "Couldn't you Michael got his letter from Fort on the same morning, and read it aloud at breakfast to the accompaniment of squeaks of delight from the junior members of the family. Neither he nor Mary had thought much about the old man, but wondered sometimes if he must not be very lonely. As to being in any way remembered, it was not to be expected now. So when he looked up at his wife his eyes were much brighter than usual. The summer holiday was generally a fortnight packed very tight into three small rooms. And even that was welcome.

"Can we manage it, dear?"

"Of course we can, and must." fluttered like a motherly sparrow, which, in fact, she rather resembled. "Cobham is only about forty minutes from Waterloo, so you can reach us every night before seven. And the children will—oh, my dear—of course we must manage it. But I wish——"She broke off, her eyes suddenly moist.

"What do you wish?"

"It was for more than one month."
"It's a lot better than nothing."

"I know, but--"

She gulped a little and fell silent because at the moment her heart was very full. Mike looked too old, too driven, too finedrawn. Four children and herself on eight hundred a year—and nothing much ahead. He never thought of himself. The rest of them would pull through all right, but she wanted the country for him, with its blessed

bird of an uncle of yours has any reasoning powers at all we ought to score like anything. You'll hear about it yet."

Now to those who know it, Cobham must seem a gracious spot with the pinewoods out Oxshott way, and lush meadows, and great oaks and elms shading the roads, and



bowered cottages that almost invite a caress, and the languid river gliding through field and covert till it reaches the corn-mill where there is a dripping clerking waterwheel and inside

dripping, clacking waterwheel and, inside, the rumble of great stones. And beside the river, on one of its loveliest bends, stood the old Hamlin house.

The place was really very complete. It had been let from time to time, and had linen—firmly woven stuff made when sheets were really sheets—and glass and silver with the Hamlin crest on it, so that Mary needed to bring but little with her. Mockridge met them at the station and was regarded by Philip, the older boy, with intense interest because he must know all about gold and kangaroos. And when they reached the house there were squeals of delight, and there commenced what is to childhood the most

spaciousness and healing calm. Then in two days came Fort's second letter, enclosing a copy of the one he had from George, and it seemed that the cup of life was full. Two whole wonderful months. Sixty-one precious evenings in the peace of the country. So Michael's response was very grateful, and he sent such an acknowledgment to George as made George turn rather pink and reply quite testily when Betty patted him on the back and vowed he was a tactical genius.

"And," she added, "if that queer old

absorbing pursuit of all, the exploration of

totally new territory.

One passes over the first week or two, except to say that both Michael and Mary began to feel younger. It may have been the vegetables that Mockridge produced in ever-increasing quantities, or the still sweet nights, or the birds, or the untainted air, or the entire unexpectedness of the thing. Anyway, it worked, so that Michael lost some of his stoop at once, and laughed far more than he used to, and loved the mile walk to the station in the cool of the morning; and at evening there were always some of them who met him for the walk back. And Mockridge was a treasure.

Mary and her husband were sitting on the lawn one Sunday afternoon when the great idea swam into her mind, so great that she put it forward quite breathlessly.

"Mike, couldn't we buy this place?" "Heavens-I wish we could. Just think

of it!"

"But why not?"

"My dear, you're dreaming."

"Can't we do it by paying so much down, and the rest monthly in rent and purchase."

"We'd go on paying for ever. And

where's the first amount?"

"There's my thousand pounds." I'd love to put it into this."

He pressed her hand. "We swore we wouldn't touch the emergency fund."

"I rather feel that if we lived here there

wouldn't be any emergency."

"Perhaps not," he admitted. "I'm beginning to feel that way myself. But suppose Uncle won't sell? He could, long ago, if he'd wished to."

"Why not try? What do you think it's

"It would be very cheap at thirty-five hundred."

"That would be twenty-five hundred left on which we'd have to pay how much?"

"Say five per cent."

"But we're paying nearly that now, and

just for rent."

"I know. There's another difficulty. We're only occupying till the end of August, and we couldn't hear till the end of September."

Ealing stretched drably before her eyes, and it frightened her to realise how much she had begun to dread it.

"We could cable, couldn't we?"

There was a lingering note in the voice that touched her deeply, and she silently

resolved to see young Mr. Fort next day. Then her gaze wandered to that corner of the garden in which stood the cottage. Mockridge was smoking, with four enraptured youngsters at his feet. She remembered that it was to be kangaroos this afternoon. Mike and she were curious about Mockridge. From what they gathered, he had been a long time with Peter Hamlin. But he spoke of his employer with no particular interest.

He's a queer man, ma'am. I don't mind saying that. He's stayed up-country till he's sort of got used to doing without people. Seems he wasn't much wanted at home when he was young—there's a good many in Australia like that. No, ma'am, he never said anything about his relations to me. Wirraloo Ranch, yes, it's a tin-roofed house surrounded by sheep, and as lonely as you like. Yes, I'm very comfortable here, and I always have mended my own socks, thank you, and I like the children round me whether I'm working or not. More colour now, haven't they, ma'am?"

It was then, with the great idea looming large, that she realised that without Mockridge the place couldn't be the same. Would

he be content to stay?

"I haven't any agreement with Mr. Hamlin, ma'am. He gave me the job for the summer, that's all, but if it so happened you stayed on I don't know that I'd want to move." The idea seemed to please him, which, at the moment, meant a great deal to her. She felt encouraged, and ventured further, wondering how much he knew about old Peter Hamlin.

"You see, Mockridge, we'd like to buy it if we could, but if we did we'd have to run it awfully economically, and I don't see how we could give fifty shillings and the cottage. Do you think we might arrange something like your taking over all the vegetable garden just as if it were yours, and we letting you live in the cottage and buying our vegetables from you—and—and in that case we wouldn't pay any wages and you'd look after the place for the use of cottage and land?" She said this rather nervously, but very much in earnest.

"Just as though I owned it?" he asked

gravely.

"Yes. Would there have to be some sort

of agreement?"

"Not in Australia, but here, yes, I reckon there would. I'll think it over, ma'am. Meantime, I hope I'm giving satisfaction?"

She put her hand impulsively on his arm.

"I can't imagine what we'd do without you, any of us. And, Mockridge, if you don't stay I'm not sure that we want to buy."

He touched his cap. "I'd be glad to have Mr Hamlin know that if he comes

along."

She went to see young Mr. Fort next day, and it struck her that he was secretly amused when she stated her case. But he was very understanding, and, she thought, sympathetic, though he doubted the wisdom of cabling. Mr. Hamlin would hardly cable Added to this was the fact that a a reply. few months previously he had declined a proposal to sell for a larger sum, all cash.

"I suppose," she asked rather dejectedly, "vou couldn't bring any pressure on him? After all, my husband is a blood relation."

Young Fort stroked his smooth chin. don't think he's the sort of man that yields to pressure."

She sighed. "I'm afraid not, but if he could only see the children it might make a difference."

"Perhaps the wisest thing is to let the matter stand for a few weeks, when I should know whether he will be in England this summer or not. It's quite possible he may take the house himself in September."

"With Mockridge?"

"I don't believe he would part with Mock-

ridge."

She realised that it had been a pointless question, and pictured this lonely, hardfisted, cantankerous, irrational old man enjoying the house and garden while the rest of them were engulfed in Ealing. Queer how just a taste of Paradise made one greedy for more. But it wasn't for herself.

"Then I'd better wait?"

"I would, if I were you."

She smiled her thanks, and all Michael heard that night was that Mr. Fort rather expected Mr. Peter Hamlin in England before very long.

It was in the second week in August that a rakish and very expensive car slid along a leafy road in the vicinity of Cobham, and George, who was driving, had an inspira-

"I say, old thing, wouldn't it be a decent act to look up Michael? He must be somewhere close by."

"Why?" said Betty. "We're late for tea as it is."

He put on the brakes. "Dunno, but I've a sort of curiosity to see the place. Only take a minute." He beckoned to an elderly man who came up the road as he spoke.

"Can you tell me where the Hamlin place

The man looked at him with a slow interest. "I'm going in that direction myself. It's about a mile from here."

"Jump up, will you? I'll take you

along.'

The stranger got into the back seat, to Betty's obvious discomfort, which she made no attempt to conceal, the car moved forward, and George nodded sagely.

"We don't lose anything by a visit you can cut as short as you like, and it backs up our generosity in giving way to Mike. Also it keeps us in a kind of touch with the old bird himself. Brothers meeting under his

hospitable roof—eh?"

Betty was not much impressed, being that day rather worried. A payment on the car was overdue, and tradesmen—in general-had lost their manners-at least to her. Life, in short, on three thousand a year had become a very embarrassing problem.

"Do you think we were wise in refusing his offer after all?" she asked reflectively.

"Dunno, but if the old boy sees my letter and swallows it we shouldn't lose anything."

"How much do you think he will carve up ? "

" No telling—but there'll be more fat than lean. Misers are generally profitable."

"Mr. Hamlin's place is the first on the right, sir," said a dry voice from the back

"Thanks-look here, we're only going to be a few minutes. Will you keep an eye on this bus, and I'll leave it outside?"

As a visit it was hardly a success and perhaps not quite fair. Mary looked flustered and surprised, the other four very earthy from grubbing in the garden, George and Betty in contrast very well dressed and Londonish. The neat things George meant to say all evaporated, while Betty sent sidelong looks at the house and tried to imagine herself being in it. They got away as soon as they could, and found the car with a flat

"How did that happen?" said George, and became busy with a jack. The elderly man helped by request, and Betty smoked.

"We're well out of that," she said thank-"What on earth made your uncle fully. think we'd go there?"

George was dirty by now, and rather cross. "Don't ask me-sort of long-distance throb of humanity, I suppose. Hanged if I wouldn't like to sell this bus."

"You can't. It isn't yours yet."

"It will be if I can raise another three hundred."



"Hope springs eternal. Did you ever see she said anxiously. such a mess as those children?"

"I rather liked 'em."

"I didn't. I wonder if your uncle is

really coming over?"

"The possibility leaves me unmoved. We'll have to ask him to stay with us if he does."

"Think he eats with his knife?"

"Probably—who cares. I say, you, twist the other way with that wrench, will you?"
"Sorry, sir." The elderly man was rather

Mary met her husband at the station that evening, and he read the letter on the way back.

red in the face. "I don't know much about

"Do you think there's any chance?"

He was not sanguine. "If I'd seen the man I might know. But it's not very

promising."

She slipped her arm into his, and tried not to appear downcast. Passing the cottage they saw Mockridge, and told him the news. He took it very quietly, and ventured to remind her that she had promised to put in a word for him. She said that the appearance of the place ought to speak for itself, and that seemed to please him. Also she wondered if he had grown as fond of them as they had of him. She did not put that into words, because she was attempting to put their coming departure out of her head, but not very successfully.

Then a second letter from Fort to the effect that he had communicated with his client, who might consider the offer in order to keep the property in the family would decide later. Something whispered that it was wiser to wait for more definite news before she told Michael.

London-Michael's wife very busy in preparations. They were giving Peter Hamlin their own room, the one overlooking the lawn,

"I suppose," she said, "that it's as comfortable as Wirraloo Ranch ever was?"

He nodded. "They're not in the same street, ma'am, for comfort."



"Mockridge was smoking, with four enraptured youngsters at his feet. She remembered that it was to be kangaroos this afternoon,"

and when it came to arranging the furniture she called in Mockridge.

"Is there anything special you can think of he likes to eat?

"There again, ma'am, you can't make any mistake. After a man has lived on fresh mutton and flapjack half his life he'll lap

up anything."

"You know," she ruminated, "I'm awfully afraid he'll change his mind about selling and want to stay here always."

He was inclined to think that the exile

might want to stay.

"If he does," she said, with an anxious little laugh, "you'll put in a word for me, won't you?"

"I will, ma'am, if I have any kind of a chance. But Mr. Hamlin don't take kindly

to influence."

"H'm. I think it would be nice if you brought in some flowers. Are there many in Australia?"

"Practically none, ma'am, in the sheep

country."

Then Saturday afternoon, with the Michael

Hamlins on the lawn, ears cocked for the sound of a taxi. Mockridge out of sight for the time being—the juniors very sleek and impatient—Mary sending questioning glances at her husband, which he tried to answer with an encouraging but not overconfident smile—bees droning, and a whisper of wind in the trees.

"Philip," said Mary, "please tell Mock-ridge he may be wanted any minute to help

with the trunk."

"He's not in the cottage, mother. I was there a few minutes ago."

"Then find him, dear."

Philip went off. Two—three—five minutes passed, and the boy came racing across

the lawn, his eyes bulging.

"Mother, I couldn't see him anywhere, then found him in your old room changing his shirt. When I asked him what he meant by it, he laughed like anything and said he'd be down presently to explain."



IF FOLK WOULD CARE.

THERE is sufficient of delight
Sweeting the world by day and night,
To shame the surliest man, I think.
Wide pools there are where come and drink
Small-bodied beasts with lovely paws;
Wild birds there are whose little claws
Take one small twig and cram a tree
So full of mellow minstrelsy
That folk must leave their bricks and run
Into the shining of the sun.

The earth holds such wide charity
Of blossoms, that it seems to me
There might be fragrance and to spare
For all men's minds if folk would care.
Then should one man look on another
And find no wide fault in his brother;
Then love for love's most marvellous sake
Should leaven the bitterest breast, and break
The vast and terrible pretence
That mocks the heart's magnificence.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

MR. ERNEST DUMPHRY, MRS. EDNA WILTER, MR. FOOTE, AND THE LATE NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LENDON

A s chartered accountant Mr. Dumphry was concerned with absolute facts and the absolutely correct presentation of facts. In this he was expert and inflexible. He had all the cold certainty of death and the taxes.

But on his way back to his residence "The Rest House," Tessel Road, he perceptibly thawed and expanded. He became capable of an optimistic view or even of a slight exaggeration. His interests were wide, and included the arts so far as he understood them or a shade further. In his leisure hours his enthusiasm was highly inflammable. He was ready to go into any subject and quite likely to go in off the deep end.

On a Saturday afternoon after luncheon, Mr. Dumphry picked up the local newspaper and carried it off to his study for perusal. An hour later he opened his eyes, straightened himself up in his chair, flicked the tobacco-ash from his waistcoat, and picked up from the floor his pipe, his eyeglasses, and the aforesaid newspaper.

And an advertisement in the newspaper chanced to attract his attention. It stated that the world-famous medium, Edna Wilter, would be in the neighbourhood for the ensuing fortnight, and on every day except Sunday would be ready to hold séances between the hours of two and six and eight and eleven. Edna was specially controlled by Napoleon Buonaparte, Sir Walter Scott, and Sambo, the negro revivalist. Edna was

kindly permitted to offer references to well-known people. Descending to comparatively sordid matters, the advertisement stated that the charge for a single admission was ten shillings. By a generous concession the charge for two members of a family or two friends coming together was only seventeen-and-six.

No sooner had he read this than it was quite certain that Ernest Dumphry would be one of Edna's patrons. It was also probable that (some afterglow of the chartered accountant remaining) he would take advantage of the reduced terms.

But Ernest himself did not yet know this. As with many others, his unconscious mind might come to a decision, but his conscious mind was sent out on a quest—predestined to success—for adequate reasons for accepting the decision.

The adequate reasons were in this case soon forthcoming. Mr. Dumphry had never been present at any séances, though he had read reports of them. In the past he had spoken slightingly and even contemptuously of spiritualism. Yet he had never personally investigated the matter. Was such conduct on his part right? Was it fair? Was it, so to speak, British? It was not. And from that moment Edna Wilter, could she have known it, might have been quite certain of at least eight-and-ninepence of Mr. Dumphry's best money.

Mr. Dumphry accordingly proceeded to inquire whether any member of his family

would care to accompany him in his investi-

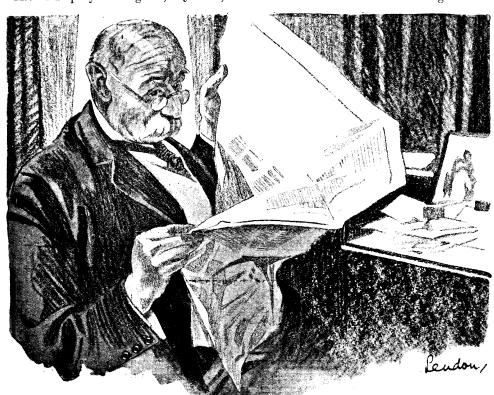
gation. He drew blank.

"Really, Ernest," said Mrs. Dumphry, "I am surprised that you should ask me. I am not superstitious nor nervous. But bells and tambourines going off suddenly in the darkness, with icy breaths, and blue flashes, and quite possibly spirits hovering, are more than I could undertake or should be asked to undertake. You know what I'm like next day when I've not had a proper night's rest."

Mr. Dumphry's daughter, Queenie, a

any cricket eleven or football team. He was not, and never had been, a player. In his profession he was terribly artistic, and in private life he was not without common sense, though he preferred to be thought cynical.

Ernest calculated that at six he would be able to secure Pierce Eveleigh. He crossed the road and found Pierce at home. He submitted to a good deal of talk about that football match with every simulation of interest. He submitted also to a certain amount of chaff from Mrs. Eveleigh—known



"An advertisement in the newspaper chanced to attract his attention."

practical and up-to-date young lady, was also opposed to the project.

"Eight-and-nine's rather a lot," she said.

"And I don't know of anything I wouldn't sooner spend it on. It's simply devastating—bores you sick and stiff. It's not a game for the young. Now Mr. Pierce Eveleigh might like it."

Mr. Dumphry's friend and neighbour, Pierce Eveleigh, an architect of some local eminence, was not immediately available, as he was a spectator of a football match. He took an interest in sport, and could comment unfavourably on any selection of to her intimate friends (and to her husband when in a good temper) as Mouse. But in

the end Ernest gained his point.

"What I think," said Pierce, "is that the results obtained by spiritualism up to date are not commensurate with its pretensions, nor even consistent with them. I also think that we could get a better show for less money at the Picture Palace. Still, I've never been to a séance and may as well go. Saturday's no use—the football's rather special that day. But if you'll take Wednesday afternoon off for this spirit game next week, I'll do the same."

And Mr. Dumphry joyfully assented.

So on Wednesday about half-past two Mr. Dumphry and the eminent architect arrived at the address given in the advertisement. It was not a brilliant address. street was poor. The house, which was semi-detached, seemed as if it might be in the habit of letting furnished apartments. Many houses in the street seemed like that, and even proclaimed the fact by notices in the windows.

A maid answered the door, not too clean, frightened, fish-eyed, and thick in the ankles. But she was almost immediately supplanted by a short and quite nicely dressed man who emerged from an adjoining room. He looked as if he might be rather older than he looked.

"Come in, gentlemen," he said. "You have called for a séance? You are fortunate. Madame is disengaged at the moment. We have had a great rush of work here since our arrival. However, kindly step this way."

He took them into the room from which he had just come out. It was furnished very much as a ground-floor sitting-room generally is in houses of the type. There was the usual aspidistra in the front window. It looked as if it were dying. But it had looked like that ever since the house was built, and had never died, and probably never would. Behind the aspidistra was a writing-table which did not look as if it belonged to the rest of the furniture. was cumbered with papers and notebooks and there was also on it a cone of tin about one foot in height.

The little man selected one of the notebooks. "I should perhaps explain," he said, "that I am Mr. James Wilter, the husband of Edna, but unfortunately not sharing in any way her marvellous gifts. I merely act as her business manager. The first thing for you to do, gentlemen, is to sign your name in our visitors' book."

He presented the notebook opened with the date written at the top of a page. Pierce Eveleigh inscribed his name first in his characteristic and very angular handwriting, and Mr. Dumphry followed in round, simple, legible letters.

"Good," said Mr. Wilter. "Now the next step is the payment of the fees, which we always have in advance. Ten shillings each, I think."

"Seventeen-and-six, for two friends," said Mr. Ernest Dumphry (with the chartered accountant well alight in him), and he put down a ten-shilling note and three half-

"Quite so. Quite so," Mr. Wilter agreed. "I did not know whether you had come together or not. Now before we begin there are just one or two points to mention. Firstly, we do not profess to tell the future, and if at any point Mrs. Wilter should seem to indicate it, no charge is made for that part of the entertainment, if I may use the word. Secondly, we expect you to act as gentlemen. The medium is my wife, and I must respect her health. Any sudden use of electric torches during the dark séance would be most prejudicial to it. And if we are fortunate enough this afternoon to obtain any materialisation of the great Emperor or one of the other spirits controlling Mrs. Wilter, I must beg you most earnestly not to make any attempt whatever to touch the materialisation. It is a wellknown scientific fact that such materialisations are formed from a substance called ectoplasm, emanating from the body of the medium. Subsequently to the materialthis ectoplasm is re-absorbed. Any interference whatever with this process exposes the medium to the greatest possible risk. It has been known, though the case was not allowed to get into the papers, to cause death."

Mr. Dumphry shuddered. Clearly he

would have to go very carefully.

"And now," said Mr. Wilter more lightly. "For the first experiment, will each of you write down on these slips of paper the name of some lady in whom you are interested? Do not of course show it to me, but when you have written it drop the slip into that tin cone and close the base of it." He walked away to the other end of the room.

The two investigators wrote the names they had selected with their respective

fountain-pens on the thin slips.

Under directions from Mr. Wilter, still at the further end of the room, Mr. Dumphry placed those slips in the tin cone, closed the base, and secured it with a seal from his own signet ring. The base was not of tin like the rest of the cone. It was composed of closely woven wire. Mr. Dumphry satisfied himself that the slips could not be extracted through the very small orifice at the top of the cone. Nor, when he looked through that orifice, could be even see them—much less read them.

"Well," said Mr. Wilter, "I think we are now ready to begin."

He rang the bell and asked the maid

with the thick ankles to tell Madame that two gentlemen were waiting for a séance. He hardly had time to add one or two pungent and searching remarks on the weather before the door opened and Edna herself en-

tered.

She was rather a large woman. She wore a loose and flowing robe of black. She had two rings of bronze on her fingers and certain bracelets of green jade, or thereabouts, on her arms. Her face was pale, her eyes were very small, and the colour of her hair a warm chestnut that did not look quite real. Nor, as a matter of fact, was it.

"Let me introduce these two gentlemen, my dear," said Mr. Wilter.

"They are—bless my soul, I saw their names in the book and I've forgotten them."

"As the glow increased they became conscious of

a figure. It was beyond

mistake the Napoleon of the portraits.

"That does not matter," said Edna. "Perhaps I may be able to find them for myself. Shall we get ready to begin?"

Mr. Wilter became busy, placing chairs round the table, opening a small harmonium in the corner of the room, and talking rapidly the whole time.

'I think that's all," said Mr. Wilter.

"Very well," said Edna, and seated herself at the table. "Mr. Dumphry, will you sit on my right—and you, Mr. Eveleigh, on my left? Place your hands on the table before you, please."

Was it not marvellous? Edna had never been near the closed book in which the two men had written their names. James had definitely stated that he had forgotten them. Yet Edna now knew what their names were.

"You have our names quite correctly," said Mr. Dumphry. "Very remarkable."

"They just came to me," said Edna, smiling faintly. "James, will you darken the room now, please, and give us a little

> James drew a double curtain over the window, and groped his way to the harmonium, knocking against Mr. Eveleigh and apologising. He played a lugubrious tune, with errors for which the darkness may have been responsible, though it can hardly have been the

> > instrument so fiendishly out of tune. James now took his place in the circle,

darkness that made the

and instantly momentary sparks of light red, blue, and green—showed themselves on the writing-table against the window.

"The spirit lights," said James in an

awestruck and audible whisper.

The lights ceased. There was a minute or two of absolute silence, broken suddenly by a shriek of loud, wild, negro laughter. It startled Mr. Dumphry considerably.

"Sambo, the revivalist," said James, explanatory but still awestruck. often here. Listen. Good afternoon. Sambo."

"My respec's to de company. I'se gwine ter tell yo' somet'ing," said Sambo, speaking, as it were, via Mrs. Wilter.

And Sambo went on speaking for some time. It was a semi-religious discourse, delivered at great speed and frequently unintelligible, containing a few very aged

jokes. Mr. Dumphry became deadly weary of it, and suddenly the discourse ceased—snapped off in the middle of a sentence.

"Another spirit is present," the awestruck James whispered. "And Sambo is jealous. He is often like that. You must excuse him."

"Who is the other spirit?" whispered

Mr. Dumphry hoarsely.

"Sire! Emperor! Napoleon!" said Edna in an approximation to her natural voice.

moment it increased in clearness and intensity and then died out suddenly into the darkness again.

"If either of you two gentlemen would like to put a question to the great Emperor, he will probably respond through the medium by automatic writing."

Now this was all very well, but neither Mr. Pierce Eveleigh nor Mr. Dumphry had come there prepared with any question whatever which they could put to the Emperor Napoleon. They offered apologies



They did. A faint glow, hardly a light, appeared some two yards behind Mrs. Wilter's chair. As the glow increased they became conscious of a figure. It was beyond mistake the Napoleon of the por-

beyond mistake the Napoleon of the portraits. It wore a black cloak and its hat was correctly period. They could see that just below it the medium leaned back in her chair with her mouth wide open. For one which were well received and Mr. James Wilter announced that this concluded the séance.

The curtains were drawn back and the light restored. Edna gave a realistic representation of a person recovered from a

heavy sleep, but Mr. Dumphry was not to

"Just one point," said Mr. Dumphry. "My friend and I each deposited the name of a lady in that tin cone over there on the writing-table. There was some suggestion that you might be able to tell us—

"Oh, that," said Edna. "Yes, that's all right. You wrote the name Queenie, Mr. Dumphry. Your friend, Mr. Eveleigh, wrote the name Monica—at least it was a pet name for Monica. The actual word written was Monse. Am I correct?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dumphry.

"No," said Mr. Eveleigh.

Outside in the street Mr. Dumphry asked Mr. Eveleigh: "What do you make of it,

"Mighty little for eight-and-nine. And I should say the whole thing was a fraud. What do you think yourself?"

"Well, I suspend judgment. Of course you do make your u's very like your n's, Pierce."

"What's that got to do with it? We were told that those slips were sealed up and invisible to the human eye. Spirits should be able to see what you mean just as much as what you write. I don't pretend to explain everything, but the thing leaves me with an impression of fraud. Isn't that so ? "

"I shall deliver no opinion as yet," said Mr. Dumphry. "It will be necessary to witness one more performance. I shall be there on Saturday, and I hope you will come with me."

"Come, come," said Mr. Eveleigh. told you about the football on Saturday."

On Saturday afternoon Mr. Dumphry, as he approached the doorstep of the spirits, encountered a young man approaching it from the opposite direction. The young man wore a light suit and tortoiseshellrimmed spectacles. His hair was very smooth, his lips were very thin, and he apparently possessed character.
"Hullo," said the young man, "you here

as a believer?"
"Merely an investigator," said Mr. Dum-

phry. "And yourself?"

"Well, I'm just putting in a week-end with my family and I thought I'd push in here on the offchance that there might be something I could use for my show. You may know my name."

The card which he handed to Mr. Dumphry bore the name "Mr. Morning Foote,

Illusionist."

"I'm extremely glad to have met you," said Mr. Dumphry. "I have been here before, and I am by no means satisfied about the show myself. You may be able to help me to a decision."

"I shall be," said Mr. Foote. "Let's

push the push and get them moving."

Mr. Foote rang the bell in a loud and prolonged way which seemed to Mr. Dumphry slightly irreverent. Asked if he had called for a séance, Mr. Foote said lightly that what he really wanted was half a dozen absolutely new-laid, but he would take a

séance to be going on with.

The programme was almost exactly the same as before. Mr. Foote wrote down his name as Richard Smith, and was thus addressed by Edna. He seemed to take the whole thing light-heartedly. When James began to play on the harmonium Mr. Foote inquired if they couldn't cut out that imitation of a cat with the stomach-ache. Mr. Dumphry felt that such an attitude was all wrong, and yet he noted that during the whole thing Mr. and Mrs. Wilter seemed to be a shade afraid of Mr. Foote.

The only variation of the programme was that Sir Walter Scott obliged with a few words in a Glasgow accent. The address by Sambo, the revivalist, was, so far as Mr. Dumphry could recall it, precisely the same as on the last occasion. Mr. Foote made no comment or remark until he was asked if there was any question which he wished to put to the Emperor Napoleon.

"Yes," said Mr. Foote. "There's a well-known saying of his that he addressed to Hudson Lowe on the island of St. Helena, and I've often wondered what he meant by it. He said that the English had but eaten the outer husks of victory and that the kernel might yet poison them."

The light was admitted, and Edna was provided with a writing-pad and pencil.

What she wrote was:

"I meant that the English had conquered me, but that this very fact might prove dangerous to them. It might produce a spirit of aggrandisement and imperialism, of recklessness without any feeling for the poor and oppressed, of very wide and dangerous ambitions."

"There is your answer," said James, handing the block to Mr. Foote. "Are you satisfied?"

"Quite," said Mr. Foote, without reading the writing. "Shall we be going, Mr. Dumphry ?"

"One moment," said Edna. "You each of you deposited in the tin cone, sealed with Mr. Dumphry's seal, the name of a lady. You, Mr. Dumphry, wrote the name Jane."

"Correct," said Mr. Dumphry.

"And you, Mr. Smith," Edna proceeded, "wrote the words: 'Little Fanny Foxface.' I may add that I think you are hardly approaching so serious an occasion as the present in the right spirit."

"Very likely," said Mr. Foote cheerily.
"But don't let it depress you. Good-bye,

Mrs. Wilter. Good-bye, James."

"It was almost worth while to pay the money," said Mr. Foote cheerfully, when they were walking away together, "to see how rotten a show can be. Thirty-ninth-rate conjuring."

"But these people have the highest

references."

"Have they? You didn't write to them. If you had, you might have heard a different story. In any case, the only reference from a medium that I should think worth notice would be a reference to a first-class illusionist."

"How then do they get their results?"

"Easy as kiss. James does most of the work. Pretends to forget the names entered in the book. While he's messing about with the chairs he gives the names to Edna by position code—and he's not very smart at it. The dummy top-half of Napoleon is kept in the top of the harmonium, and James gets it out. While Edna is trying to talk negro dialect, James goes over to the writing-table, slips the cone over an electric light, which has been hidden by the litter, glues his eye to the top of the cone, and switches on—quite enough light comes through that wire-woven base to show the names on the slips. He writes them down on another slip, comes back, and puts that slip in dear Edna's handkerchief which has conveniently fallen to the ground. He's kneeling behind her while he manipulates the Napoleon dummy."

"But how do you know it was a

dummy? "
"Eyes never moved. And a painted and varnished mask lights up differently from a real face. The lighting's done by an

at first."

"But that great saying of Napoleon to Sir Hudson Lowe—I noticed you never even read the explanation of it."

electric torch with the bulb slightly darkened

"Because Napoleon never said it. I made that up on the spur of the moment. I had James under observation. When the room was first dark he pretended to grope clammily—really he has his guiding points and moves as easily in the dark as in the light. He wore squeaky shoes—but he kicks those off after the séance has begun, and moves without noise in his socks. I had only to stretch my hand out to find if he was still in his chair—I did so. Clumsy and childish—the whole thing."

"Why didn't you expose them?" asked

Mr. Dumphry.

"Why should I?" said Mr. Foote goodnaturedly. "The poor duffers have got a living to get. Besides, they knew I knew."

"I rather think they did," Mr. Dumphry agreed.

On his return to Tessel Road, Mr. Dumphry called on Pierce Eveleigh and announced that he was now in a position to expose the whole of Edna Wilter's tricks, and to show how they were done. But Pierce Eveleigh was not in the mood at the moment for being impressed.

"Of course, Ernest," he said, "it's very clever and ingenious of you. But I understood you were out to investigate spiritualists—all you've done is to show that these people are not spiritualists but common

frauds."

"And is that my fault?" asked Mr. Dumphry coldly.



THE COMPOSER OF "VALSE TRISTE" AND "FINLANDIA"

A STUDY OF THE ART AND PERSONALITY OF JEAN SIBELIUS

By WATSON LYLE

ERY probably few among the many thousands who listen in café and cinema to the haunting strains of the "Valse Triste" of Jean Sibelius are aware that the creator of that delectable piece has over a hundred other works of greater significance to his credit, that he is the foremost composer of his country, Finland, where he is regarded as a figure of national importance, and that in the wider field of European musical art his influence is making itself felt.

The composer whose reputation with the general public has been decided by a single composition is no rarity. To most people the name of Handel automatically suggests "The Messiah"; of Mendelssohn just one of his "Songs without Words," the "Spring Song"; of Rachmaninoff, the Prelude (although it is by no means the greatest work, or the only Prelude, even, that the Russian master has written); of Elgar, "Land of Hope and Glory" (which happens to be just part of a composition—a March in D), and so on. But while it is very true that none of these compositions, save "The Messiah," is near the highest creative level of its author, all, like the waltz which has borne the name of Sibelius from inaccessible Finland to the more familiar centres of civilisation, bear the distinctive idiom, the characteristic imprint of their composers bound up in

the universal appeal made by their melody and rhythm.

Within the limitations of its genre "Valse Triste "is the quintessence of the personality of Sibelius-nervous and shy in the expression of his inner emotions, yet, on occasion, stung to an explosive revelation of them by an impulse that proves stronger than his habitual reserve and introspective aloofness. The waltz is but one number from the incidental music written to a drama, and its character has therefore been influenced, to an extent, by a "programme"—which is described later in this article; but even so, the frenzied outburst of its second theme is markedly individual, and as representative of the personality of Sibelius as the sinister portent of the beginning when we come to regard the composition in relation to several of his big works, such as the symphonies tone-poems. When Sibelius appeared here, at an orchestral concert in Queen's Hall in 1921 to conduct some of his own works, the public had evidence of his aversion from the limelight, and it was apparent that his music would have been better served by another conductor. Because of their nervous sensibility, or ignorance of the technique of conducting, many composers are hopeless as interpreters, in public, of their own music.

Jean Sibelius was born on December 8, 1865, at Tavastehus, Finland. As a child

his musical bent was noticeable, but he was not, at first, educated for the art in which he has achieved fame. Instead, he received a legal training in his own country and in Sweden, all of which was so much wasted time. Indeed, during these impressionable years the deadening effect of his education in the atmosphere of the law, upon his natural imaginative gifts, may be responsible for the self-consciousness in his music, and his personality, although he is, physically, a tall, erect figure of a man. To the same cause may be traced a certain formality in dress and manners, and the severity of countenance that individuals of a retiring nature are wont to assume as a kind of barrier between themselves and strangers.

As the young artist reached maturity his consuming love for music irresistibly swept aside other plans for his future, and he entered the Conservatoire of Helsingfors. The influence of its director, Wegelius, a Finnish composer, may have stimulated the strongly national bent in the music of Sibelius, and have encouraged him, ultimately, to shed the esthetic suasion of his later studies in Berlin under Becker and Goldmark. However, his studies in Germany were invaluable in giving him a greater command over technical resource in composition, but for a time they also exercised an unfortunate (and practically inevitable) influence in cramping his freedom of expression, and in Teutonising his style. earlier works are unoriginal—the 6 Impromptus (Op. 5) for piano might have been written by Grieg—and an examination of the scores of his orchestral music shows that several years elapsed ere he completely cast off the shackles of his sojourn in Germany, and allowed his own individuality unhampered scope in his constructive methods. This emancipation occurred at the period of thirty-seven to forty years of age, leaving him with his acquired technical facility as the servant of his muse.

But much earlier than this, soon after his return to Finland from Berlin, his fellow countrymen hailed him as a composer specially gifted to express their national qualities by means of his art. Those in authority recognised this in a very practical way by granting him an annuity so that he might devote himself to composition free from pressing monetary worries. Again, on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday, the Finnish nation acclaimed him, and a first performance of his 5th Symphony was given at Helsingfors to celebrate the festivity.

Ten years later, on his sixtieth birthday last year, the President of the Republic of Finland bestowed upon the famous musician the Grand Cross of the Order of the White Rose of Finland, and the Finnish Diet voted an increase of 50,000 marks in the pension granted him at his fiftieth birthday, thus bringing it to 100,000 marks. More interesting than all this, however, as a sign of popular affection and admiration direct from the people, was the sum of 270,000 marks subscribed by all classes, of which 150,000 marks were offered to Sibelius for his immediate use. Such appreciation of a composer during his lifetime, and by his countrymen, is without parallel.

Only Time, the great arbiter in all estimates of esthetic values, can decide if this financial, and moral, incentive has enabled the composer to realise his artistic self better than if he had been left to his own devices, like many of the great ones of music, past and present.

Sibelius has certainly worked hard to merit the confidence reposed in him by his countrymen. He has kept with them their implied faith in him as a composer of nationalistic expression, an ideal that concurs with his abiding love for the lakes, canals, islands and mists, and miles and miles of forests that alternate with the stretches of marsh and flat wastes of the country that is homeland alike to him and to them. He has an unusual ability for translating into terms of music these natural features of the country-side—the shimmering waters, the strange echoes in the forests, and the bird-calls, and the depression emotionally conjured up by the desolation of areas of waste land, and the ghostly veiling of objects by mist and fog. In fact, it is by emotional suggestion quite as much as by musical realism (i.e. the direct representation of natural sounds by means of music) that his art becomes an expression of his country and the psychology, the prevailing sadness that is a legacy of hundreds of years of oppression, of his countrymen. He is more truly "national" in such music, than when he uses music of folk-song origin, or folk-song type, as the material from which to fashion a symphonic poem or orchestral suite.

Very often he employs tunes suggestive of the rustic dance, the crowd of village folk waiting to be ferried across a river or lake, or by the drawbridge of a canal, or the more heroic strains associated with some ancient saga; but I cannot see that this

practice (as is frequently contended) of itself gives to his music the hall-mark of national expression. The mere use of a folk-tune does not impart this characteristic to a composition. Nationality in musicwhen it manifests itself at all-goes deeper than that. It springs from an innate love of country, and it is this quality in the music of Sibelius, and not his frequent use of folk-tunes, that gives him place as the first, great, racially distinct Finnish composer. His symphonic poem "Finlandia" (Op. 26/7) is often cited as an example of his strong, nationalistic expression, but whilst it is certainly based upon material of folk-song type, its constructive manner, and, to an extent, its emotional content, are dominatingly Teutonic. This quality in the work may explain its ready acceptance beyond the borders of the shut-off corner of Northern Europe whence it originated. It explained itself in the musical language current in Europe and was therefore more comprehensible than many of the later works in which the emotion and the spirit are more truly national. The alien influence is even more apparent in an earlier work, the tone-poem En Saga" (Op. 9) ("A Tradition"), despite the folk-tune character of its themes and the nationalistic feeling that pervades it. The technique, although adequate, is hackneyed, and there is a tremendous difference between the lack of originality in technical resource in this poem and the individuality of the 3rd and 4th Sym-"En Saga" is fairly regularly performed at the Promenade Concerts, like 'Finlandia' and the "Karelia Overture.

There is an effort at escape from extraneous suggestion the 2nd Symphony in D, an impressive work of which Sir Hamilton Harty conducted a performance in Manchester in March of the present year. Curiously enough, its assertion of individual and national traits is heard chiefly in the rhythm, and the harmonisation of the themes. In the second movement we have two of these agreeable little tunes holding an animated conversation with a comparative freedom from eighteenth-century German heaviness that is worthy of Bach. One of these tunes reappears in the fourth and last movement of the symphony, a finale that is instinct with the rugged, direct expression of Sibelius when sheer intensity of emotion causes him to forget his self-consciousness.

The mood of "stürm und drang" seems

to come more naturally to the composer than the outlook that is illumined by humour and wit, such as we find in Debussy, Ravel, and Bliss—to instance but three of the moderns in whose music this saving grace is a refreshing quality. But in commenting thus one must remember differences of nationality. Sibelius in his gayer moments reminds one of Beethoven in jocund mood—a rather graceful Beethoven, it is true, but a personality who is merry, and jolly, in the rustic, downright fashion that represents a phase of gaiety widely different from the rapier finesse of a spontaneous wit.

A good deal of homely good humour of this kind and a generally optimistic mood is expressed within the three movements of the short 3rd Symphony (Op. 52) in C that is very appropriately dedicated to a genial British composer, Granville Bantock. Although slighter and briefer than the 2nd Symphony, the 3rd is notable for a greater diversity of expressive means coupled with increased technical facility. Its prevailing mood of confidence is, in fact, at variance with the tendency of Sibelius to dwell upon the sombre and the awesome. The two first movements of the next symphony, the 4th (Op. 63) in A minor, are lyrical, and imbued by a delicate poetic imagery that conveys to the listener an impression of natural characteristics of the native land of the composer. Particularly in the second movement we seem to hear, afar off, the fluting of shepherds and the calls of birds. The heavier manner of Sibelius, however, becomes again evident in the third, and for part of the fourth movement, in which the emotion is blatantly vigorous; but nevertheless, the work concludes very softly with a resumption of the poetic mood that dominates its commencement. The 4th Symphony received its first performance at the Birmingham Musical Festival of 1912. The 6th Symphony, like the 7th, which was finished only early this year, is still in manuscript, and neither of them has been performed far from the country of their creation.

Sibelius has devoted a good deal of attention to programme music, i.e. to music that seeks its inspiration from literature, the drama, or folk-tales. The rich store of folk-lore and popular poetry collected by Dr. Elias Lönnrot during his travels among the country-folk of Finland, and published by him in 1835 as "Kalevala," has been largely drawn upon by Sibelius for transmutation into musical art. He has

written three lyric pieces for the piano on the "Kylliki" episode in this national epic, and two orchestral works, "The Swan of Tuonela" and "Lemminkâinen's Homecoming" (Op. 22, Nos. 3 and 4), the latter composition a favourite with concert audiences here. and the vivid little sketch of peasant life, "By the Drawbridge," as well as the more elaborate tone-poem "The Bard" (Op. 64), which is in the nature of a concerto

> for harp and orchestra, written with special attention to the expressive qualities of the harp as a solo instrument, and to display the technique of a good harpist. The strong and dignified theme is frequently reiterated by the harp, the orchestra being chiefly concerned with elaborations of it. One can well imagine the wanderings of the harpist over the countryside, singing at each resting-place the saga of which the impressive melody used as the recurring subject of the poem is the symbol.

> The familiarity of Sibelius with aspects of nature is very delightfully expressed in another tone-poem, "The Dryad" (Op. In this a plain-45). little melody. tive heard from the violins. seems to indicate the nymph waking from slumber in some leafy nook of the woodlands. Stretching her limbs, she sets off in pursuit of a butterfly, the melody being elaborated and becoming animated more suggest her gambols. By devices of orches-

tration that may be conventional, but are entirely appropriate, Sibelius, at the same time, cleverly produces an imaginative vision of the play of sunlight upon the leaves of the trees. and of shafts of radiance piercing the shadows beneath them. The Finnish composer's treatment of the subject is entirely



Photo by]

JEAN SIBELIUS.

making a direct appeal, by simple means, to the imagination, an effect of spaciousness and an heroic mood being created.

To this vein of sentiment in the composer, if not directly to the "Kalevala," may also be attributed the beautiful "Karelia" suite and overture, already referred to, as different from that of the Frenchman, Debussy, in his very familiar "L'Après midi d'un Faune."

The programme that suggested the "Valse Triste" is contained in the drama "Kuolema" (Death) by Arvid Järnefelt, the waltz being merely one number from the incidental music written by Sibelius. The scene is briefly as follows. The son falls asleep from sheer weariness during a night vigil by the bedside of his dying mother. There is a gradual illumination of ruddy light, and sounds of distant music from which evolves, sinuously, the uncanny melody of the waltz. The sick woman awakens, rises from her bed and begins to move slowly to and fro, and beckons to the rhythm of the music. Ghostly couples waltz around her. She mingles with them, but they avoid her glance as they whirl round to the increased speed of the dance. She sinks exhausted upon her bed, but regains her strength and joins them again, dancing more madly than ever. There is a knock at the door, which opens. She cries out despairingly, and the spectres vanish. Death is seen in the doorway. All who are familiar with the waltz, especially in the tone-qualities of its original orchestral version (in the piano arrangement much of the eerie orchestral "colour" is naturally lost), will comprehend how realistically the music accentuates the fantastic situation in the drama.

In his music for the theatre the composer has sometimes written for foreign authors, as in the incidental music for Maeterlinck's "Pelléas et Mélisande," and the drama of Adolf Paul, "King Christian II," founded upon a page of Swedish history. The latter, a fairly early work (issued by his principal publishers here, as long ago as 1899), has one number, an Elegy, that is particularly beautiful, and prophetic of his later, imaginative manner. There is also a conventional Serenade, and a very rowdy Ballade, both savouring of Berlin. The Suite is sometimes played here and was last heard at the "Proms" in 1922. The Suite to the drama "Belsazar's Gastmahl" ("Belsazar's Feast"), by Hj. Procopé, although much later (Op. 51, 1907), is again chiefly notable for the conventional mastery of the thoroughly equipped musician; but it is saved from mediocrity by one exquisite number—"Solitude"—in which Sibelius expresses in his most sensitive fashion the solitude, of miles of open country and lakes innumerable, that is familiar to him. The Concerto in D for violin and orchestra, a characteristic work, was performed in London as recently as March of this year.

We find the more intimate moods of Sibelius frequently in one or other of his many songs, such as the passionate "Black Roses," the melancholy fatalism of "The Tryst," the poetic vision of "Was it a Dream?" and "The First Kiss": while in his slight contributions to musicians' music of the most intimate genre-that designated "Chamber Music"—there is a surprising divergence of manner from the style of his big orchestral works. There is no hint of folk-song, even, in the Romance in C for strings (Op. 42) that has a passionate intensity in the second theme in which, as it were, we catch a momentary glimpse of an emotional outburst from a nature habitually reserved. A tenderness that has more pathos than passion in it permeates the exquisite little "Minnelied" (Op. 66/2).

From the outset of his career Sibelius has occasionally written specially for the favourite instrument of the home—the piano—an early example of this being the Sonata (Op. 12); but he is more successful, in his piano music, with miniatures, such as the much more recent "Twelve Selected Pieces," in two volumes (various numbers from Opera 75–94), published in 1921 by Chesters. They might briefly be described as sharply defined silhouettes of the trees and flowers whose names they bear.

The only opera written by Sibelius, the first purely Finnish work of that kind, "The Maid in the Tower," was produced at Helsingfors in 1896. He is not an old man as composers go—Verdi was eighty when he completed his last fine opera, "Falstaff"—so there is yet reason to hope that he may make a notable contribution to musical art in this form, as he has already done to the Symphonic form in the case of at least two of his symphonies, the 2nd and 4th.





OUR LADY OF DREAMS

By F. DUDLEY HOYS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

THE sun had a million small rivals in the hill-side groves. They flashed their warm gold towards the coast, and stirred now and then as the breeze passed. They were the treasure of the country, the magic offspring of white blossom-foam—oranges. For five miles by the sea and three inland they reigned in fragrant splendour, and the trees that held them were a canopy of soothing green. By contrast, the road above the water seemed an inferno. White dust and a glare of light. But at least it was narrow, a mere pin-line to the vista of cobalt sea. So the man who trudged south forgave its offence.

"After all," he told himself, "the dustier the road, the fresher the groves look."—

Which was characteristic of Lieutenant Everard Farris. He never could find fault with anybody or anything—except himself.

Plain description best serves him, for he was a plain young man. Small, thin, with a face so ordinary that it escaped notice, he owned the same sort of personality. True, his eyes deserved closer study. But nobody ever took a second glance.

Through the dust he plodded, and behind him came Scheherazade, his pet gazelle. It had been christened thus because, as Farris explained, he could find nothing more graceful in the world of names. It expressed the leap and lilt of gazelle in flight. It had the long slenderness of its owner's fawn lines.

These reasons, perhaps, give a clue to

Farris's eyes.

Scheherazade trotted along serenely. Two years among men had inspired trust. No lure of the hills tugged at her, no visions of dusk in the heights when bergamot and rock herbs drench the night, nor of wild races in the valleys. Farris had caught her young, in the far northern pine belt. Kindness soon banished fear. Like scores of her kindred, Scheherazade became a cheerful pet. Down here near the coast she saw none of her own kind. But that didn't trouble her. The officers were sufficient company.

At the point where the coast road rises and the white houses begin, Farris started to look uneasy. He pulled at his tie, smoothed his tunic, passed an exploring hand over a chin shaved merely out of courtesy to twenty-two. His pace slackened. He regarded the red roofs, the shimmering groves as if they were new sights. Finally he halted and told himself not to be a fool.

"Getting worse each time," he declared. "Anybody 'ud think you were a child.

Pull yourself together."

To help break the spell he picked up a pebble and threw it mightily. "After it," he said, and the gazelle flew forward, a flash of grace skimming the road. She waited ahead for him to come up—months of patience had failed to teach the art of retrieving—and Farris stared at her thoughtfully.

"You know, 'Zade, when you run you're the most beautiful thing in the world—

except Our Lady of Dreams."

Here his eyes were wistful, though his lips smiled. In a few minutes he would be meeting Our Lady of Dreams, having tea on the balcony of the Colonel's house. For an hour or so he would watch her, giving himself up to a surge of longing that even crushed the granite hopelessness of desire. But at present, the vital business was to dismiss his shyness before the meeting.

Everard Farris had no illusions. He accepted himself at his own face value. He wasn't tall, well-built and attractive like Lawson. Had he the polished wit of Barrington? Certainly not. Or the convincing air of much-travelled Dakers? Not a sign of it. Therefore, he reasoned, it was madness to hope. But he could have a little secret pretence, even ousting Lawson in dreams. Of course, there was no danger of the pretence conquering sanity. Rivalry remained in the realms of the ludicrous.

All the same, pretence helped things a bit. "D'you remember, 'Zade," he said, "the day she came? The Colonel going off in the tender? Then the boat chugging in, full of lascars, and in the centre Our Lady of Dreams, like—like a flower in a coalmine?" The inadequate simile made him grin. "It was a wonderful title Dakers found for her, Our Lady of Dreams. She's the lady we all dream about—and don't get."

The gazelle's soft eyes seemed to glow with sympathy. He stroked the silky muzzle.

"Why wasn't I born big, iron-jawed, magnificent, with twenty earls as ancestors, and an estate, and oceans of money and brains to match?"

Scheherazade being unable to explain, Farris came down to earth. "Instead of which, I'm signalling officer over a company of natives. That's the limit of my description. While Our Lady of Dreams has an important father, a duke for a grandfather, and—oh, don't let's talk about it! It's appalling!"

The gazelle sniffed indignantly, as if to point out that she never had been thinking about it, and they went on down the steep

hill into the town.

Beyond the bordering mulberry and olive groves the houses clustered thickly. Colour ran riot, in greens and reds, with the cooling sheen of the sea as a background. The workshops were beginning to empty as he passed through. Here were skilled workers who inlaid brass ornaments with copper and silver wire, tapping out the patterns with their little hammers more swiftly than an artist's tracing hand. Here were keeneyed, feather-fingered wood-carvers who made mosaic tables, ever fitting minute fragments into intricate designs—until blindness intervened.

At the place where the main road opens into the square he turned to the right through a flagged garden. The official residence of Colonel Glynd was long and low, with shady balconies on two sides defying the sun. In one of these were the tea-tables, and he walked towards them with such unseeing nervousness that Scheherazade almost tripped him.

They were all there: Colonel Glynd and his wife, Lawson his A.D.C., Dakers and Marriott of the Political Service, the doctor—and Our Lady of Dreams. She was dressed in white, something quite simple that stressed her youth. The violet eyes and bronze hair were charming, without

being unique.

At home in England Patricia Glynd had created no sensation. People described her, in that general way, as "an awfully nice girl." Here it was different. There were no white women but her mother and the doctor's wife, both gracious matrons, so circumstance had cloaked her with perfection. Quite soon after her arrival she had discerned this fact, and felt a little frightened. Any "awfully nice girl" might be overawed by the knowledge that a circle of men placed all their faith and trust in her, offering reverent adoration as to a god. Breed, and the spur of their marvellous faith, helped her a lot. They banished the failings of an ordinary "awfully nice girl," and brought her full right to the title, "Our Lady of Dreams. "

She smiled at Farris and beckoned him to her table.

" Where's this gazelle I've heard so much about ? " "

He was saved from a stammering answer by Scheherazade trotting forward.

"What a darling! Gerald, just look at

those eyes."

Lawson, the favoured one, nodded. "She's almost worthy to be your rival," he said, and Farris thought, "Lucky beggar. Why can't I think of remarks like that?"

"There are lots of them in the hills, my dear," said the Colonel. "You ought to see a pack in flight. They're like flashes of sunlight."

The violet eyes widened in quiet excitement. Our Lady of Dreams leaned forward, her slim hands clasped. "If only I could."

"Why not?" said Lawson quickly. He turned to the Colonel. "Things are pretty settled here at present, sir. Couldn't we have a few days' gazelle chasing in the hills?"

"Oh, but you wouldn't kill them?" pro-

tested the girl.

"No, no, Pat." The Colonel gave her a paternal smile. "We use Selukis—Persian greyhounds, and muzzle them at the start. The idea is to cut off the gazelle, get it down in a valley and watch the racing over a long stretch."

"As long as they aren't hurt-"

"N-no, only frightened," ventured Farris, blushing at the sound of his voice. "And they look more frightened than they really are—the effect of their eyes, I suppose. They run because it's their best defence. But a gazelle has pluck, Why, 'Zade once

used her horns on a pariah. It was so comic, I laughed for hours." He was painfully red by the end of his speech, but delighted with his temerity.

Patricia stroked Scheherazade's neck. "Perhaps we could catch one and tame

him?"

"You'd like one?" said Lawson, most attentive of knights. "Well, what d'you think, Farris? Couldn't 'Zade act as a decoy?"

"I don't suppose she'd mind." Farris pinched her ear affectionately. "And if Miss Glynd wants one, surely the matter's settled—providing the Colonel agrees?"

They all turned to Colonel Glynd, who pretended to look very grave and important.

"Please, wise father," said Patricia.

"Most irregular, everybody holidaying at once. Most irregular, but——"

They knew that "but." It meant surrender. They all started talking at once, discussing plans—except Farris, who watched Our Lady of Dreams in silent bliss.

Afterwards, on the usual pre-dinner promenade by the shore, they continued plotting ways and means. Unconsciously they had drifted into couples: the Colonel and the doctor with their wives, Lawson with Our Lady of Dreams, Dakers with Marriott. Farris was left with Scheherazade, and they brought up the rear. It was pure chance, yet symbolic of the order of things. Farris was always so self-effacing.

The sun lost its fire, shed opal rays across the water, changed to a pink haze. Shadow crept over the groves and filled them with mystery. The beach foam shimmered and crumbled from white to mauve and mauve to darkening lilac. The orange trees rustled and sped a scented whisper.

As the short twilight died and the moon climbed up the pall of purple velvet, Farris

heard Lawson quote:

"Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane, The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again: How oft hereafter rising shall she look Through this same Garden after me—in vain!"

Generous envy filled him. Just like Lawson, being able to say the right thing at the right moment. He had a huge pull over the rest of them. But there—a jolly fine fellow, best suited to Our Lady of Dreams.

Dakers had heard the quotation too, and

capped it laughingly.

"And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass, And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass! "Which reminds me," he went on, "if we don't wander home and get changed now, there won't be a chance to empty a glass before dinner."

"Philistine!" said Lawson.

"Sensible fellow," said Marriott.

Our Lady of Dreams shivered a little. There was a sudden chill in the air. Maybe Lawson's words had helped its birth. "Come along, everybody," she said. "You'll catch cold." She came over to Farris, gave Scheherazade a parting stroke and said good night.

There was no restraint in his eyes at the moment, but darkness hid their betrayal. He turned

deep ravines ran down towards the foothills, blue phantoms below. A tiny silver cascade whispered its eternal note in the high silence. With the green forest band, the umber and grey of the shale, the glimmering whiteness of far-distant peaks, the land-scape revelled in summer glory.

Our Lady of Dreams was enchanted. She liked best of all to sit on a rock and stare at the shining snow-caps, "breathless with adoration." So far, no gazelle had been found, and there was plenty of time to laze and wonder, marvelling at the magic of distance and the vast stillness of the world.

Four miles off, in a native village, Marriott and two others were established at an advanced post. Here they kept constant watch for gazelle, which were straying



his head and raised his shoulders, like a child that scorns sympathy.

"Come on, 'Zade," he said. "It's time you were in bed."

The camp was perched high up on a spur at the edge of the pine belt. Two

now to the lower slopes as grazing gave out before their inroads and urged them nearer the valleys. With Marriott were a dozen Selukis, lissome grey shapes that lived for speed.

The last few days had been ecstasy to Farris, To be in the hills—Scheherazade

to shake hands-

a trick in which

the gazelle had

The

no interest.

hush of

no pretence, sleeping frankly with her chin

on her breast. Lawson, in dust-coloured

shorts and shirt that showed off his splendid

figure, amused himself by trickling pebbles

down a gully. Our Lady of Dreams and

Farris were trying to teach Scheherazade

tearing around in a frenzy of freedom—and Our Lady of Dreams actually living in the same camp—the whole thing seemed a delicious phantasy.

"Too good to last," he assured himself; "much too good to last," and thanked the fates when on the third night there was still no news of gazelle. Every day wasted meant a day more of the idyll, of the pretence. Constantly seeing and talking to Patricia had banished his nervous stammer. He was able to lie in bed and build exquisite Spanish castles until the night grew old and its chill brought logic—and Lawson—to shatter them down.

Undoubtedly, Our Lady of Dreams be-

longed to Lawson.
She treated them all with the same friendliness. But a fool could see how affairs must trend.
That was where it hurt. For once, the inevitable of

"Our Lady of Dreams caught his hands. Her eyes were very misty."

life seemed brutal to Lieutenant Everard Farris. It gave you no chance, not the tiniest finger-hold. Here he was, aching with worship for Patricia, and having to store it, great throbbing, prisoned waves, like a miser hoarding gold till the end comes and not a penny has been of service.

On the fourth afternoon they were lounging under a cedar. The warm pine-tang of the air made talking an effort. The Colonel dozed over a book. His wife attempted

heights was on them. A solitary peregrine rocked in the sky.

"What's that?" said Lawson, craning forward suddenly.

Came the sound of someone running, mild commotion in the camp below. Then a native guard appeared, and with him a hillman in whose staring eyes dwelt utter terror.

Colonel Glynd sat up with a start. "What's this about?"

In a panting, startled voice the hillman

explained. The news was soon told. Cholera had broken out in the village. Two of the white men were down, and Marriott had threatened the villagers at pistol point. They must all stop there, isolated, until the danger was past.

The white Effendi, the hillman went on, had shouted the message to him to be con-

veyed to his friends.

"Dear God!" said the Colonel. His expression was reflected in every face.

Cholera! The fatal word was stunning. One minute, beauty and serenity, the next —the scourge of the East abroad.

Our Lady of Dreams broke the silence at

last.

"We must start off at once, and get

"Heaven forbid!" The Colonel laid a hand on her shoulder. "You don't understand, child. Whoever goes there, stops there. Where cholera creeps there's no mercy."

Lawson looked at Farris. Their thoughts were the same. The doctor hadn't come on this expedition. There was no time to send for aid. Cholera struck with the speed of a viper. So—a helper must go now, with medicines.

"It's up to us, sir." It was Dakers who

spoke. "May I volunteer?"
"No, no." Farris lifted lifted his hand. "We'll draw lots. Better still, why not cut for it? Smith, Renwick and Barrington are down in the camp. That'll make six with ourselves."

" Pardon me—seven," said Colonel Glynd,

and his wife's face paled.

"We can't allow you to be in this, sir."

The Colonel frowned. Authority hardened his voice. "Suppose I insist?"

"In that case, sir," said Dakers quietly, "we must disobey orders and prevent you." The nods of the other two confirmed this. They were respectful but determined.

The Colonel shrugged his shoulders helplessly. Patricia slipped her arm through his. "They're right, father. Oh, this is all

so terrible.'

The tension was broken by Farris. "Not at all," he said lightly. "Heard of dozens of cases where people have pulled through. Why, I remember a chap in India telling me it hurt him no more than a pain in his pinny when he'd eaten sour apples as a kid."

It was a hopeless lie, but gallant in intent, and they smiled with him.

"Shall we go down?" said Dakers, and they descended the hill-side.

Five minutes later they were gathered in the dining-tent. Farris had brought two packs of cards and put them on a table in the corner. The six men stood around, and Fear ruled. There was no shame in their dread. He who says he is not afraid of cholera lies.

In the heat of action, where nerves leap to the thrill and the pulse beats swiftly, courage has support. The V.C. wins his Cross in a splendid flash, where thought is nothing and action all. Here, cold silence and no stimulus of war. Whoever lost must listen to his whispering thoughts and wait for the enemy that strikes unseen.

The Colonel watched with stony eyes. Our Lady of Dreams breathed fast, but her mouth was steady. Her hands clenched as she stared at the table, waiting for them to

Ace low, I suppose?" said Dakers, and

they nodded agreement.

Of the first pair, Barrington lost. Farris cut with Renwick, drew an ace to the other's queen, and joined Barrington. Lawson was beaten by a seven to a five. Patricia closed her eyes for a moment.

"Farris drew lowest among the three of you," said Dakers, "so he'll be odd man

One pack was reshuffled. Lawson turned up a ten. Barrington drew his card, paused a long second, and turned up a jack.

Farris looked at Our Lady of Dreams. Her lips were pressed firmly together and her eyes never winced. Nobody knew how very near she was to fainting.

Farris stooped to pat Scheherazade. "The honour is between us, Lawson. Good luck."

"Lawson cuts first," said Dakers.

"All right." Lawson lit a cigarette, faced them with a smile, then turned to make this third cut. Our Lady of Dreams gripped her father's arm desperately. Dakers mopped his forehead and wondered if the whole thing were a nightmare, from which he would awake soon to grateful sanity.

In dead silence Lawson drew—a king. Farris stretched out his hand. He fumbled a moment, turned up his card. A two.

There was a queer sound from Our Lady of Dreams. Farris gazed into her eyes, then back at Lawson.

"Bad luck," said Dakers. "You're the youngest, and it doesn't seem fair. Sup-

"Youngest? What's that to do with

it?" He picked up the cards, saluted the Colonel. "If you'll excuse me, sir, I'll just collect a few things and then be off."

So the late afternoon saw Farris climbing the hill road, and with him went the whole party as an escort to the limits of the village. There they posted four native guards. Their orders were simple. None must enter and none must leave, under penalty of being shot without question.

Farris chatted and joked as if it were a picnic. His shyness was gone. He shook hands in turn and made light of everything.

"Cholera's not half as black as it's painted. We'll all be chasing gazelle and running 'Zade off her feet in a few days."

Our Lady of Dreams caught his hands. Her eyes were very misty.

"Isn't there anything we can do? Anything you would like while you're—away?"

"No, thank you. Oh, please don't look so solemn!" The worship behind his smile flashed out for a second. "Perhaps you would look after 'Zade for me? She likes a saucer of milk at night."

And with that he saluted, picked up his valise and walked off. They watched his frail figure disappear into the still village. "God be with him!" said the Colonel.

They went back as the night shades were staining the hills purple, leaving him to battle alone.

* * * * *

It was impossible to sleep that night. Our Lady of Dreams lay gazing through the flaps of her tent at the mauve sky. A dozen emotions raced in her mind.

Her lips moved in a prayer for the safety of those in the stricken village. Suppose the cholera spread—suppose their efforts were useless and——

The thought could not be borne. She thrust it aside and started wondering how Farris was getting on at the village, under the same big, peaceful stars.

A queer boy. So bashful, so awkward. And very, very gallant. She would never forget this afternoon's picture of him, waving cheerily along the deserted village road, his thin legs stumbling in the dust.

She wished she had seen more of him in the past, wished she had plumbed the depths of his nature. Before, she had never analysed her feelings towards him. Now, reviewing them, she was startled. Of course, his shyness had been a barrier. He and the others had kept at a kind of reverent distance, as if Gerald held the field.

The thought angered her a little. He did not hold the field. He had no more claim or right than the rest of them. By his rather possessive and domineering manner he had made others think that she belonged to him. Well, they were wrong. He was just a friend.

Then Our Lady of Dreams heard Scheherazade crying and tugging at her rope. The gazelle was lonely, yearning to join her master.

Patricia slipped on a wrap and crept out. Her soothing fingers caressed the gazelle.

"Don't worry, you pretty thing," she said, "he'll soon be back."

He would come back. Surely, in these cool heights, among the sweet-scented calm of the pines, nothing evil dared happen?

Still the gazelle whined. Her muzzle felt hot, her eyes looked feverish. Patricia stared at the slim creature anxiously, fearing some kind of illness.—Not for her to know that mere fretting had done this.

"Poor little 'Zade," she said, "what can I do?"

Memory recalled a certain saline Farris had used once or twice. He had explained that it was a sure remedy for all the ills to which 'Zade was subject.

There was a metal medicine-chest in his tent. She could be sure of finding the bottle there.

She walked across, entered the empty tent and lit an oil lamp. There in the corner was the chest, a small, steel-lined affair, guaranteed to defy the invasion of insects.

She pulled open a drawer, still wondering about Farris. As Dakers had said, it was a shame that chance had picked the youngest. How could he know anything about doctoring the sufferers? Would he keep his head when panic threatened? He was so unconvincing—and yet, to-day he had shown strength behind his chronic shyness.

The saline wasn't in the top drawer. She opened the second, and stared in slight surprise. It contained a small pile of ash.

"Funny," she thought. "Whatever can be the use——"

Very suddenly her eyes widened. She thrust her hand among the ash, pulled out something small and white.

It was the burnt edge of a playing-card—the king of clubs. The card Gerald Lawson had drawn.

Patricia bit her lips, fingered the scrap of card curiously. Why burn the card?—There was something very strange here.

Then she saw the scorched pattern on

the back. It was different from the packs

they had used that afternoon.

The truth flashed down in an instant. Gerald had cheated—palmed a card of his own. And Farris, discovering the truth, had kept silent and destroyed what might be evidence. Why?

The answer came without effort. He had done it to save her from losing Gerald.

She understood now—the queer, half-sublime smile when he had bade her good-bye—the love behind the sacrifice.

Hot tears blinded her eyes. Clutching the burnt scrap, she ran across to Lawson's

tent.

"Gerald," she called insistently, "Gerald."
There was a murmur from within. Then
he appeared at the flaps of the tent, blinking.
"Hullo, what's the matter? I——"

He caught sight of what she held and tried, too late, to check his expression.

Patricia's hands clenched. No need to question, now. One long stare of blazing scorn she gave him, and turned away.

* * * * *

The stricken village had seen the end of its sufferings at last. The doctor's ban was lifted. Of the four white men, one stayed there for ever, and a small stone marked the place where he rested.

Farris, pale, thinner than ever, but very cheery, was brought back in triumph. There, in the Colonel's house, the gambolling 'Zade went almost insane with delight at the meeting.

Our Lady of Dreams stood watching them,

strangely grave.

"There's something I want to show you," she said at length, and led him to a palm-secluded corner.

"Do you recognise this?" She produced

the scrap of card.

Farris started. He looked at her, went

very red and turned his head away.

"You see, I know everything," said Patricia, her voice unsteady. "Why did you do it?"

He moistened his lips, fidgeted nervously.

"Because—because—"

There was glory in her eyes as she smiled. "I wish you'd tell me," she said simply. "I know the answer, but I'm longing to hear you say it."

He took a step forward, amazed, incredu-

lous.

"My .dear, you can't mean it? Why

"I do mean it."

There was one answer alone to that. Its nature? Well, it was only for her ears, or rather, lips.

CYNTHIA.

A GENTLE voice is rarer far
Than pearls or other jewels are;
A gentle smile does fitly grace
The sweetness of a lovely face.
So Cynthia, in her wisdom, shows
How well this learning she bestows,
And by her mind and manners decks
The fair perfection of her sex.

Are you but sad, if she be near,
Ere long the sorrows disappear;
If ill, her gentle touch does chase
The frowns of anguish from the face.
Anger and discord dare not wait
From her their well-deserved fate;
For should they linger, by this maid
Quickly in ashes they are laid,
So all-consuming is the fire
Of her sweet love and kindly ire.

EILY ESMONDE.



"He cautioned Fenan to silence and together they stood looking down."

ESCAPE

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

ENAN and Claude Daveluy were having supper with their friend Antoine Dèsors, the actor. Their table was set in an alcove, which made the chattering groups at the other tables seem a little remote. Now and then a woman's laugh would lift itself above the low rhythm of voices; for the rest the sounds from the other parts of the room were mere background for their own conversation.

Fenan was speaking of Dèsors' gift for impersonation. He and Daveluy had recently seen him in "The Fourth Guest," and had been impressed by his portrayal of

the hero. Fenan insisted that Dèsors had to an unusual degree the gift of assuming another's personality.

"I wonder if it's as unusual a gift as people think," Dèsors suggested. "It's done daily by men and women off the stage. The waiter who brought us our supper to-night may be a consummate actor. He may hide some private ecstasy or despair under that mask of immobility. The greatest actors don't always move behind footlights."

Daveluy poured wine into his glass and lifted it to the level of his eyes. "Most people's impersonation would be no more

than that. It would merely colour the glass. But Dèsors becomes molten metal poured into a mould and reshaped."

"I like that," Fenan applauded his friend's simile. "I believe Dèsors could deceive us to-morrow as to his identity if

he wished to."

"You prick my vanity," Dèsors laughed. His laugh ended, he sat silent, fingering the stem of his wineglass. Consideration sat heavy on his forehead. He retreated into some secret citadel of his personality. Presently he leant across the table, his voice fallen to a lower note. "Do either of you know the village of Ecourt?"

Both Fenan and Daveluy answered in the

negative.

"It's an ideal spot," Dèsors declared. "There are hills; a river full of vagariesfalls and still reaches; between the hills there's a far-off peep of the sea. There's a picturesque old inn too. Certainly you should visit Ecourt."

Dèsors fell silent again. Some vagrant thoughts had him at their mercy, sealing his tongue. He broke the seal presently

with crisp sentences.

"Go to Ecourt for a week, you two. Stay at 'The Three Gates.' I can recommend it. The cooking is excellent. At the end of a week you'll probably consider the idea of spending the rest of your days there. It's a siren of a place."

"But why?" Fenan urged. "You ring the curtain up before we've rehearsed our parts. Why should we go to Ecourt?"

Dèsors shrugged and leant back in his chair. "Impersonation—I thought were hot on the trail of the subject. I was going to challenge you. But if boredom has you already-

"No, no," Fenan protested.

"You pique our curiosity," Daveluy said

quickly. "What's the challenge?"

"Simply that I will come to Ecourt. You shall see me, speak to me. And I think you will not know me." Dèsors' eyes went from one face to the other, grave, scrutinising. Daveluy had the thought that behind the mask of a jest gravity lurked some subtlety of meaning that escaped them.

"An excellent game," Fenan applauded. "Certainly we'll go. Did you say the river offered good sport to fishermen? Daveluy's great at the game. At all events you

vouched for the cooking."

Above the sound of voices a clock struck the hour—sonorous notes mingling with the froth of laughter in the room.

Dèsors rose to his feet and presently the three men were out in the street, with stars and a vivid moon above their heads. air was tonic after the heat of the supperroom. Close to them the river was a jewelled track reflecting stars. The voice of the city had grown fainter—a giant turned sleepy.

At the far end of the street Dèsors stopped. "We meet then this day week at Ecourt?" Fenan and Daveluy assented, laughing. They watched Desors stride away into the

night till the shadows hid him.

"Some clever make-up," Fenan suddenly "He'll come to us as a fellowtraveller, a gardener, our boot-boy perhaps. It's the kind of game he can play to perfection."

Daveluy was silent. A game, or something of import? A mere matter of makeup, or some subtle unveiling of personality? Behind the screen of Dèsors' jest surely some hint of gravity had lurked?

Daveluy quoted a line from "The Fourth

Guest."

"'You may seek me. But what if I make the clouds my allies?' "

Fenan and Daveluy found Ecourt all that Dèsors had promised. The cooking would have satisfied an epicure. The inn garden sloped to the river and the sound of running water was an orchestra played for the guests' delight. The fancy pleased Fenan.

"An orchestra, with Undine for conductress. Don't you hear her calling the

players to order?"

"I could rather imagine her laughter," Daveluy suggested. "She sides with Desors. Where is he? He might be a guest at another table. For instance, look at the old man at the far end of the room."

Fenan shook his head. "Dèsors' dis-guise won't lack subtlety. The part of fellow-guest would probably appear childish in his eyes. He's more likely to be that miserable beggar who whined at the cross-

roads as we came along."

Daveluy bent across the table, speaking slowly. "We take our recognition of one another for granted—an elemental thing that can't trick us. It's one of the natural laws. Yet sometimes—" He shrugged this graver mood aside to meet Fenan's laugh.

"You're piqued in advance.

afraid Dèsors will win his wager."

The meal over, Fenan strolled towards the inn garden. The landlord stood on the doorstep, looking at the summer night.

ESCAPE.

"You would like coffee out there, Monsieur?"

Fenan assented. "We have fallen under the spell of Ecourt," he added.

"Certainly it would be a pity for a man

to die without seeing it, Monsieur."

In the garden shadows were heralding the approach of Night. They ran before to spread a carpet for her feet. The river's voice was music for Night to march to; it presaged the coming of a stately guest.

Fenan sat drinking his coffee, realising the beauty of the evening. Daveluy joined him presently and they smoked in silence. Overhead the sky became illumined, as if a hand moved from end to end of it, lighting

innumerable lamps.

Through the stillness there came presently the sound of footsteps on the high road. Someone came haltingly through the shadows.

"Is that a blind man?" Daveluy asked.

"A lame one," Fenan suggested.

The gate opened and a man came up the path towards the inn door. Light from an open window fell on the new-comer and revealed a pedlar, stooping beneath the weight of his goods. He detected possible customers in Fenan and Daveluy and came towards them. With persistence he pressed his wares upon them. He had a shrill voice that broke into the stillness of the air, shattering it as a thrown stone might shatter glass.

"This cigarette case—I wish I had as many cigarettes as it will hold. If Monsieur will fit it into his pocket, so. . . ." He turned to Daveluy. "You too would like one? Lacking it you would envy this other gentleman. 'I too would possess such a case'—I see the words trembling on your lips, Monsieur, as I look at you. . . ." His

voice ran on interminably.

Fenan and Daveluy watched him, their eyes keen. They listened to the timbre of his voice; followed his gestures.

"You have walked a long way?" Fenan

questioned.

"From Dorsay. A bad road for a lame man. And to-day with little success to shorten the miles. An empty pack is as good as a carriage—better, because it promises supper."

The landlord came into the garden. His

voice was stern for the pedlar.

"Pardon," he exclaimed to Fenan and Daveluy. "I do not allow my guests to be worried by these pedlars. The high roads are alive with them. They come to

the inn as if one had nothing to do save buy from sunrise to sunset. Supper?" He caught the word from the pedlar's lips. "Heaven forbid that I should turn a hungry man away. Come, and leave these gentlemen in peace."

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The pedlar followed his host, still voluble. Presently the sound of his dragging foot-

steps ceased.

"Is that pedlar Dèsors?" Fenan won-

dered.

"I remember him as the lame hero in 'The Last Meeting.' He made the sound of halting footsteps an expression of personality. You felt you would have known many things about him even if he had never opened his lips."

"I can believe it. Dèsors is like that. He can use unlikely mediums of expression. But what about our pedlar of this evening?"

"He is not Dèsors," Daveluy said instantly. Fenan was laughing softly. "We're like children playing hide-and-seek, going cautiously round corners expecting our hidden playfellow to leap upon us. But for caution's sake I should challenge the man in the room next to mine. Whilst I unpacked my valise he quoted De Musset aloud. He had a sonorous rolling voice."

Fenan got up from his chair and moved towards the inn door. Daveluy presently followed him. At the stair foot they lighted candles that threw flickering gleams before them as they mounted the stairs. The circles of light ran before them, vagrant will-o'-the-wisps. At the head of the stairway Daveluy paused. He cautioned Fenan to silence and together they stood looking down.

Antoine Dèsors had come into the passageway below. There was no attempt at disguise of dress or make-up. He stood for a moment talking to Pésan, the landlord. As if conscious of scrutiny Dèsors glanced to the head of the stairs, recognised Fenan and Daveluy and nodded his greeting. In another moment he had stepped beyond their range of vision. His voice sounded for a moment talking to the landlord, and then silence fell.

Daveluy turned to his room and Fenan followed. Behind a closed door Fenan said quickly:

"That was Dèsors?" His voice halted over the interrogation, steadied again. "Of course. A fool's question."

Daveluy had crossed to the window and stood looking at the moon-flooded garden. He beckened Fenan. "Is it Dèsors?"

A man was moving to and fro about the garden. He went slowly as if he lacked the free use of his limbs. Some invisible weight dragged at his heels, and pressure sat heavily on his shoulders. The head was held erect with an effort. The whole body seemed to sag.

There was a path under Daveluy's window and Dèsors presently passed along it. He looked up at the two men. Moonlight was

revelation. It was Antoine Dèsors' face—strangely altered; for a moment almost the face of a stranger. . . . The dragging footfalls passed, grew faint in the distance, ceased to sound. A breeze, born of the night, lifted and swayed high tree branches, set them rustling, whispering. Running water was a mysterious voice from the shadows.

Daveluy turned from the window. He was quoting Dèsors. "I will come to Écourt. You shall see me, speak to me. And I think you will not know me."

They stared at each other for a moment of silence. Desors—and yet surely not Desors?

Say that he

Pedlar, fellow-guest—such jests were for children. There was something about the Dèsors they had just seen that filled them with a sense of dismay. Daveluy picked up the word from the welter of his thought, laughed at it.

"Dismay—and it's only a game we're playing."
"Is it?"
Daveluy said quickly, "Do



had changed the soul of him, leaving unchanged the mere outer shell. Tricks of make-up—they were child's play only.

"' There's probably a woman at the centre of the

you remember his sudden gravity that night at supper? The mask of a jest, and behind it——"

"Yes?" Fenan urged. "And behind it?" "Something secret, and shadowed—like the night." Daveluy jerked a hand towards the unscreened win-

ality. . . .

window. Again those halting steps. And again for a moment that haggard face upturned to the light of the moon. Dèsors, hiding in some walled citadel of person-

Daveluy bent from his window.

"Dèsors."

The sound of footsteps ceased.

Yes? You want me ? "

Daveluy voiced mere platitudes. He and Fenan were well pleased with Ecourt. inn satisfied them. The fishing they would try tomorrow. Perhaps Dèsors would join them.

> "Certainly, if you wish it."

""Good. To-morrow at Well. ten. goodnight, Dèsors."

Odd how tongue-tied he had felt, Daveluy told himself. To talk with Dèsors had been easytill to-night. The man had tact, a rare charm. Now

he had withdrawn himself behind an impalpable barrier.

'Like Fenan, I must have dined too heavily," Daveluy decided. "Too many courses are fogging my senses. It's a comedy we play, not melodrama."

Dèsors had already left the inn when Fenan and Daveluy went downstairs the next morning. Pésan, the landlord, was

curtly communicative.

"Monsieur Dèsors went out early. Fishing? Yes, I believe so. He left the message that he would meet you at the place where the road forks to Delle." Again that odd suggestion of contempt in the man's manner. Monsieur Dèsors—and a whip of disdain in the landlord's voice as he named

Fenan moved to the door on his way to his own room. Half across the floor he hesitated, then came back to Daveluy's side.

"'She was as fragrant as this is—and as pure.

If flowers express her my words can't.

"Did you notice the landlord's voice whilst he was talking to Dèsors? He spoke -not as he would speak to us. There was a suggestion of contempt . . . " Fenan shrugged and moved again to the door. "I'll go to bed and sleep these fancies off. Probably I dined too heavily."

Left alone, Daveluy went across to his

The morning was exquisite—tonic, sunlit. Ecourt showed its twisting streets as sheer witchery. Carved doorways lured the fancy, and each flight of worn steps might lead to enchantment.

Fenan touched Daveluy on the shoulder. "There's Dèsors."

He was walking before them through the narrow street. Something unusual about his walk claimed their notice. It lacked freedom; it was the step of a man who was invisibly fettered. This was Dèsors with the fire out of him. It was Dèsors' body, lacking its familiar spirit. Daveluy threw Fenan the two phrases under his breath.

An old peasant woman came hobbling down the street. Passing Dèsors she momentarily raised her head. The change in her was instant. She shrank against the wall, persistently staring. A few strangled sentences came from her lips. Then swiftly, with a gesture that for a moment made her regal, she gathered her skirts aside, and passed Dèsors with a movement of disdain. Once past him however her tongue became voluble. Her gesticulations were dramatic. A group of men and women joined her and they stood there steadily staring after Dèsors. Even when a bend of the street hid him from sight they still gossiped and gesticulated. Fenan and Daveluy following in Dèsors' wake passed unnoticed. woman's voice rasped perpetually and a shrill chorus of assent followed her tirade.

"That's where his shadow passed.

my foot upon it-so."

The action was applauded. The voice ran to and fro like the shuttle of a loom, weaving a strange fabric. Antoine Dèsors -and this handful of villagers casting contempt on his name!

Clear of Ecourt the road was a long ribbon stretching to the hills. And still that odd figure of Dèsors moved steadily before them. At the place where the road forked to left and right he waited, his eyes on the ground.
"It is Dèsors?" Fenan whispered. "A

fool's question. Hallo, Dèsors! We've had the forethought to bring lunch—and a good one. Old Pésan makes a delectable salad."

They walked together to the spot agreed on. Fishing was a favourite pastime of Daveluy's. Fenan and Dèsors were novices following in his wake. Lunch-time found Daveluy's basket half full, the others empty.

"At all events hunger brings us to the same level," Fenan laughed. "Over Pésan's dishes we shall be comrades again."

The talk at first was almost entirely

Fenan's. Dèsors was monosyllabic—and that ineffectually. His "Yes" and "No" came at random. Realising this he pushed his plate aside half filled still, and lighted a cigarette.

'Pésan's confections taste to me like sawdust." He stared hard at the other two. Presently he quoted, "'I will come to Ecourt. You shall see me, speak to me. And I think you will not know me.'—Do

"Hardly," Daveluy admitted. "Say we see you through smoked glasses."

Dèsors nodded. His eyes went again from Fenan's face to Daveluy's. think it's a game we're playing?"

Daveluy shook his head. Fenan's "No"

was sharply uttered.

"You're right. Shall I tell you why I came to Ecourt?"

Dèsors' pause lengthening, Daveluy broke it impetuously. Divination came so quickly that his words stumbled and hurried. "For a little time you wanted to be yourself the real Antoine Dèsors, a man with some shame at the core of him."

Dèsors' hand touched Daveluy's shoulder. "Thanks, most understanding friend. Would the history of it bore you? Or you, Fenan? I can begin and end before you've emptied Pésan's hamper."

"There's probably a woman at the centre

of the story," Fenan forecasted.
"Yes. In the time of her youth." Dèsors plucked a wild flower from the hedge near him, and toyed with it. "She was as fragrant as this is—and as pure. If flowers express her my words can't. She was beauty in essence." Dèsors shrugged. call her indescribable and then try to paint portraits. Well, you've partly visualised her? Add poverty; add innocence—and you have her. For myself—take a youth who didn't know what prizes Life had up her sleeve for him. Actually he allowed this village girl to love him, loved in return. But Fate tossed him one day a jewel called Fame. Ecourt, the people of Ecourt—they were mere dirt under his feet. An elegant figure, this Antoine Dèsors!"

His contempt was almost grotesque. A flail for his own shoulders! His voice was a

whip, leaving scars.

"Success went to my head. I'm of that type. Drunk with rounds of applause! Antoine Dèsors—the actor." His gesture was superb-conceit in every angle of his shoulders. "As for Lucille Fernaux of Ecourt—pouf! . . . " He blew imaginary

thistledown into the air. "That and nothing more to Dèsors, the favoured of fortune."

"Ah, I see, I understand," Daveluy said. "That explains the attitude of Ecourt. The landlord, the chattering groups; and that old woman in the street just now-"

"Yes?" Dèsors prompted.
Daveluy moved his foot in mimicry till it rested on Dèsors' shadow, flung athwart the grass. "'I set my foot upon it-so."

"That was old Suzanne Fernaux, Lucille's grandmother. She passed me as one would

pass a pariah."

"What of the girl herself?" Fenan asked. "Tell me and I would give you Fortunatus' purse if I possessed it. She vanished. She became a name only in Ecourt. And the years have taught me that she's the one woman. My memories of her are fragrant. I'd go to the ends of the earth to toss my success into her lap. . . . Well, there you have it. I told you my tale wouldn't outlast the sandwiches. I'll leave you to finish your lunch in peace."

"Leave us?"

Dèsors glanced at his watch. "I've just time to get to Delle and catch the express. I'm due back to-night. Here in Ecourt you've seen the man with the paint off. You've seen me, had speech with me—and found a new man. Well-till our next meeting!"

Fenan and Daveluy discussed the quickly retreating figure. It was the man with his mask once more adjusted! He showed himself to the world now, cleverly camouflaged.

Pésan greeted them on their return to

"Monsieur Dèsors has gone. He went to catch the express at Delle. He has gone—and the air feels cleaner." He grew heated, speaking in shrill sentences. Ecourt would have none of him. As to Dèsors' treatment of that girl Lucille Fernaux—— Pésan felt sick at the mere memory of it. There were men, he ended, for whom success spelt the end of manhood. He rolled the phrase about his tongue. It was a minute before he could become the complacent landlord again.

Fenan and Daveluy left Ecourt at the end of the week. On the night of their return they saw Dèsors in a revival of "The Last Meeting." He held the audience in the hollow of his hand, played with them, set them to laughter or tears as the mood took him. The two friends resorted to their favourite café at the close of the play.

"Superb!" Fenan exclaimed. "What a genius the fellow is!"

"Beyond question," Daveluy echoed. "He can play tunes on the nerves of his audience."

"Neat phrase," Fenan applauded. "Repeat it to Dèsors if he joins us presently. Dèsors always——"

Fenan stopped suddenly, feeling a woman's

hand on his arm.

"Pardon, Monsieur. You spoke of Monsieur Antoine Dèsors, the actor? You are a friend of his?"

"Certainly," Fenan answered.

"You too, I think, Monsieur?"

Daveluy assented. Something in the woman's manner arrested their attention. She was fat, ungainly, and with florid cheeks. Her dress was eked out with too plentiful a display of jewellery. Probably a woman to whom good fortune had come late in life. Her voice, subdued at the moment, would be shrill on occasion.

"I should like to talk to you about Monsieur Dèsors," she said. "I may seat myself at your table for a moment? Thanks, Monsieur. My husband is having a bock at the other end of the room. He will wait for me patiently. He is Monsieur Léon Tobichon, the caterer. You have heard of him?"

"The honour has not been ours, Madame,"

Fenan deplored.

"Ah well, it is no matter. I came to talk of Monsieur Dèsors. I have wanted the chance ever since I saw you several times with Monsieur Dèsors and judged you to be his friends. I knew him well as a youth. At Ecourt."

She toyed with the pendant at her throat,

half giggling.

"We were affianced. Certainly he had pretty manners, and a nice voice. He knew how to make love. . . ." She shrugged fat shoulders at memory.

Stringed instruments made music at the other end of the café. It was a rhythmic undertone to laughter and talking voices. Background too to Madame Tobichon's sen-

tences, which came volubly now.

"The people at Ecourt don't understand. Because Antoine jilted me they picture me with red eyes to the end of my days. Fancy And I the wife of Léon Tobichon, who has a fat purse and knows how to empty it! Not that they know down at Ecourt how I am fixed . . . one naturally climbs up from those beginnings. I don't desire all my relatives to pull Léon's purse-strings open because I was once Lucille Fernaux of Ecourt. Mon Dieu! no. It is not to be expected. As for Monsieur Dèsors, he too seems to forget that I myself have climbed and desire him no longer. It would be a bore. Frankly, we were not born for each other. Give me Léon, hearty and robust and with no fads. Antoine was full of them."

There was something grotesque in the interview. Behind her strident sentences Fenan and Daveluy had a background of Dèsors' remembered phrases. "She was beauty in essence."

She shook her fat shoulders in laughter. "It chanced that I heard of Ecourt this week—the first time for years. Rolie, the farrier, was here to see a relative and we met in the street. It was tiresome. Once let them hear down there how well I am placed——" She dismissed future entreaties with a gesture—then bent forward whisper-"Rolie told me that Antoine had been back to visit Ecourt. Actually they treated him as dirt! For my sake! And I wouldn't give a cent for him. Léon will tell you how devoted a wife I am. But I am not hardhearted. If Antoine suffers from regret, how can I cure him?" She simpered into silence.

"It is simplicity itself, Madame," Daveluy said quickly. "Do nothing. Rejoin the excellent Monsieur Tobichon and finish your bock."

"Certainly he has waited long enough. But explain to Antoine that as Madame Tobichon I am in a position to laugh at that old folly. I don't want him to have regret. As I said, I am not hard-hearted." "Trust the case to us, Madame," Fenan

gravely assured her.

She was seated at her own table before Dèsors came in. But the stage was well set—Dèsors in shadow and the Tobichon party in full glare of light. Strident voices too—Madame Tobichon's rose in vociferous appreciation of a jest.

Desors' ears challenged, his eyes too grew vigilant. That fat, overdressed woman in ecstasies over a joke! It was a case of vulgarity with a big purse out for the evening. Probably the woman had once been good-looking. You caught a stray hint of it now and then—hunting for lost treasure in a dust-heap.

"And she was once Lucille Fernaux," Desors said abruptly. "My eyes will take no denial. They assert the truth vehem-

ently."

A waiter bent attentively for Dèsors' order.

"Nothing," Dèsors told him. "At least,
yes—a glass of iced water."

The waiter departed in amazed silence.

Desors' lips twitched suddenly. "Have you ever escaped from a burning house? Or been rescued from a sinking ship? Or seen a bullet pass a hair's-breadth above your head? If so——"

"We understand," Daveluy nodded. "An

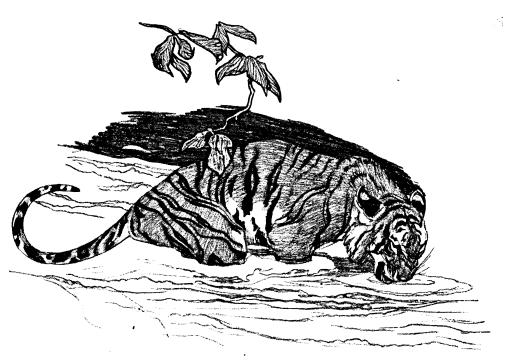
ecstasy of relief."

"Let's leave this place," Dèsors said abruptly. "We'll go to my rooms. I'll order a supper fit for the gods. We'll make merry there till the stars go out."

KIND EYES.

THE twilight dims the colour of your eyes;
I cannot see how brown and kind they are.
You gaze so gravely at the sea so far
Below the pines. Nearby the cypress rise,
Dark 'gainst the blue vault of the southern skies.
Here do we sit alone . . . until the night,
So luminous with one great shining star
Twinkling above the mountain's purple height,
Brings gentle whispers of the sea to mar
The silence of the world. A small bat flies
Swift-flickering, and a white cat hunting things
Moves in the shadows. Time has lost its wings
And we are quite alone. Look at the star
That I may see the kindness in your eyes.

SELWYN JEPSON.



"When at last the welcome scent of water reached his nostrils and he sprang down into the bed of a stream that still held water, he plunged in belly-deep and lapped feverishly."

WARWICK REYNOLDS

THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

By LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON CASSERLY

Author of "Dwellers in the Jungle," "The Elephant God," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

HE tiger drew back silently into the thick undergrowth from which he had thrust out his head and shoulders, as the moonlit whiteness of the road that it bordered was obscured at the bend a few hundred yards away by seeming huge shadows moving towards the spot where he crouched concealed. They came nearer; and as they passed he saw them to be the great bulks of wild elephants.

It was a herd on the march. First with nodding heads and swinging trunks the cows

trudged by, the calves shambling along beside their mothers or treading close on their heels. Then the bulls, giants nine feet and more at the shoulder, their white tusks gleaming in the moonlight. The immature males and those long past their prime and through age or infirmity deposed from the lordship of the various family groups composing the herd followed humbly at the tail of the procession, careful to keep a respectful distance from the jealous and powerful tuskers in front of them. In single file, as

is the habit of their kind, the great beasts passed on noiselessly, their feet falling without sound on the dusty road piercing the great Indian forest, the Terai Jungle, which stretches along the foot of the Himalayas for hundreds of miles through Assam, the two Bengals, and up into Nepal, the high-perched land from which the sturdy little Gurkhas come. This thoroughfare, which thus laid bare the secrets of the vast woodland, had been made to connect tea-gardens planted in its very heart.

The lurking tiger watched the mammoths turn off into the jungle farther on and disappear; and the noise of trailing creepers dragged down, branches broken off and grass swept up in swathes by curving trunks told of their passage through the trees on their before-dawn march. He had no quarrel with them; since there is no enmity between his race and theirs, except when a hungry tiger prowls round a herd in the hope of pulling down some foolish young calf-elephant incautious enough to stray away from its kindred. But all the same he saw them go with relief. For if they had entered the jungle nearer him and spread about to graze as they marched onward, he would have had to move away from the small heap of bones by which he crouched and nosed from time to time in the hope of finding still clinging to them a scrap of flesh hitherto overlooked.

He placed his paw on the well-gnawed skull, the round skull that slipped from under the curved claws. No animal in the forest about him owned such a one; for it was too big to be a monkey's. It hardly needed the torn strips of clothing scattered about or caught on the thorns of the undergrowth to proclaim that only a day before it had been a living human being's head.

For the tiger was that dreaded pest of India, a man-eater. Small wonder, then, that, when at this hour of night all the jungle stirred, when the harmless animals were aquiver at every rustle that might speak of approaching death in shape of prowling beast of prey, this striped brute lay lazily licking with roughened tongue the skull between his paws. For not until daylight would his game be afoot; and soon over the grim evidences of his crime he nodded and dozed.

A sudden crashing in the dense undergrowth a few yards away startled him, as a great sambhur stag with branching horns laid well back on its shoulders dashed wildly through the jungle; and another tiger in hot pursuit nearly blundered on top of the

sleeper. The man-eater sprang up with bristling hair and teeth bared in a savage snarl. The other started back in surprise; and then the two great cats faced each other with fierce growls and lashing tails.

But suddenly out of the corner of his eye the new-comer glimpsed the white bones among the green leaves of the earth-plants. They told him that the stranger was no rival in the chase, that they hunted different game; and, haughtily disdainful, he drew away in disgust. For even among his own race is the man-slaver accursed and an out-The others of his breed know him a danger to them, a murderer whose crimes. bringing just retribution sooner or later, will affect them by causing the jungle to be invaded by death-dealing white men, who will not discriminate between the criminal and the innocent game-killers who must suffer for his sins.

And so with a parting snarl of angry hate the honest tiger passed on. Small wonder that he was annoyed, for the unexpected meeting had lost him all hope of overtaking the fleeing stag; and he must begin all over again the weary prowl and the silent, stealthy stalk. Suddenly he checked with lifted paw and listened, then crept noiselessly to the edge of the road.

Along it came a little mob of bison, wild cattle six feet high at the shoulder, the bulls, distinguishable by their long horns, keeping a wary watch on the dark menace of the jungle on either hand. The cloven-footed herd passed on; and the hungry hunter watching from the shadows looked longingly but hopelessly at the fat calves in it. For he had no wish to face the deadly charge of the savage monsters protecting them; and so he went on to look for easier prey.

The road again lay still and silent. Then from on high a swift shadow was flung on its whiteness; and the hush of the jungle was broken by a long, eerie wailing as a Giant Owl wheeled in circles above the trees. As the unearthly cry rang out like the lament of a lost soul, the sleeping birds woke up in affright and crouched lower on their perches; while the monkeys on the topmost branches, huddling together for warmth in the night-chill, stirred uneasily and clutched in their slumber at the hairy bodies of their neighbours.

Out on to the road under the brilliant tropic moon blundered a clumsy, misshapen body; and clear and distinct in the vivid light stood the black bulk of a rhinoceros. It looked up and down the man-made trail, sniffed the air for a moment, then wheeled and plunged heavily into the jungle again, heedless of the noise it made; for it feared nothing that walked in the forest.

Once more silence. Then a drove of wild pigs pattered with quick steps down the road, the little eyes of the fierce boars glancing restlessly from side to side for peril to their females and young, peril to be warded off by their sharp tusks and dauntless hearts.

So the night passed. The man-eater slept over the bones of his victim; but all other living things on the ground were astir, either in fear or in murderous hunger. The moon and stars faded at the coming of the dawn. A pale light crept over the sea of tree-tops of the forest and gradually revealed against the brightening sky the dark mass of the mountain barrier of the Himalayas, which rose up, first in rounded, jungle-clad foothills, then in gaunt and dizzy heights, frowning cliffs and jagged peaks towering to the clouds through which the white summits of the Eternal Snows thrust up, flushing with pink as they caught the first rays of the sun.

In the trees the birds stirred, twittered, fluffed their feathers and preened their wings, then greeted the morning with song. The clarion call of the forest, the jungle cocks' loud crowing, aroused the monkeys, who scratched themselves sleepily, yawned and quarrelled fretfully with their neighbours until they were fully awake. Then away in wild flight they sprang through the treetops, flinging themselves recklessly across the voids; but their ready paws never failed to grip the aimed-for branch.

Still the man-eater dozed in the undergrowth where it was densest by the roadside. For there the sun could reach and quicken it; but it thinned farther in where the lifegiving light could only filter to it through the thick overhead canopy of foliage.

Suddenly the tiger lifted his head, nose in air, ears pricked, as the sound of human voices broke the silence. A number of barelegged coolies, their heads muffled in blankets against the chill of the early morning air, shuffled down the road, their naked feet raising a choking cloud of dust. The tapping of their wire-bound cudgels on the ground, the raucous coughs and harsh clearing of their throats, the babble and noisy chatter, daunted the tiger, cowardly yet greatly daring, as all man-eaters are. crept nearer the road and through the screening leaves watched them until they were out of sight.

But a clatter and rattle, the jangling of

bells, the groaning of straining wood and the shricking of ungreased axles, made him draw back again as a file of bullock-carts, loaded with tea in lead-lined chests on the first stage of its journey to English breakfast tables, came round the bend, the drivers whacking the bony backs of their patient cattle with sticks and twisting their tails, while they yelled scandalous abuse of the toiling bullocks' female ancestors for specified generations back.

"Ai! teri ma! (Ai! thy mother!)," they began, and said libellous things about her and her sister and her aunt and her mother's mother, as is the way of bullockdrivers all over the Indian Empire.

They passed on in white clouds of dust. The sun had risen now; and soon came the swift heat of Bengal Again silence fell on the forest. As the day grew the beasts of prey slunk back to their lairs, the harmless deer lay down to rest and snatch the sleep that they dared not take in the perilous night. All things in the jungle, except the monkeys and the birds, ceased to move.

The road lay whiter than ever in the glare of the noonday sun. A gay chatter of young voices, a high-pitched laugh, and round the bend came a file of Hindu girls in brighthued saris, the glass bangles on the rounded arms tinkling as hands were raised to steady the bundles carried on their heads. their sleek, oiled black hair flowers were thrust with artistic touch. Their slim bodies and upright carriage, the curves of their bosoms and hips, would have delighted a sculptor; while a painter might have despaired of catching the sheen of their bronze skin and the gay colours of the garments tight wound about their graceful forms. Laughing gaily and chattering like a flock of parrots they shuffled along on bare feet, above which gleamed silver anklets. Unconscious of the Striped Death lurking beside the way, they went on picturesque and graceful; and a fiercer fire burned in the yellow eyes watching them, while the muscles rippled under the gaudily coloured skin as the powerful limbs were drawn up ready for the fatal spring.

One girl, walking alone a few paces in front of the rest, turned her head to address a remark to them. But the words were never spoken. A rustle in the undergrowth by the roadside, an agonised shriek as a huge body leapt out of hiding and with a lightning rush sprang at the unhappy woman, rose for an instant on its hindlegs and, the sharp claws protruding from the

great paws, half beat, half dragged her to the ground.

The other girls screamed and fled back. And the tiger with uplifted head, the white fangs showing in the red mouth, stood glaring irresolutely after them; while under him lay the crumpled form of his victim, a dreadful dark stain slowly spreading in the The brute hesitated, half white dust. inclined to follow the others, then with a growl seized his still-breathing prey in his powerful jaws, lifted the slight body without an effort and sprang back into the jungle with it, the girl's relaxed limbs trailing on the ground and striking against the spreading stems of the trees, while the thorny bushes caught and tore the thin garments to shreds. And the undergrowth closed behind slaver and slain.

There is no peace for the wicked, says the old adage. Scarcely had day dawned once more over the forest when again the drowsy murderer was roused by the coming of elephants; but this time they did not pass by along the road. Instead, to right, to left, behind him, he heard the fallen dry leaves crackle, the twigs snap, under the ponderous feet; and his quick ears told him that there was something strange, menacing, in the manner of their approach. These could be no group of the jungle giants harmlessly straying to feed; for there was no sound of creeper torn down or leafy branch broken off. Nor were they on the march, since they were not coming in single file as is the habit of these titans when they move on without loitering towards a new grazingground. For the sounds were all around him now; so he rose quietly, prepared for any emergency. Through the thick canopy of leaves on the tree-tops the wind could not penetrate; but a faint breeze stole at times among the boles, and the tiger crept noiselessly from the densest undergrowth to a spot comparatively open and there, lifting his great muzzle, sniffed. Instantly he stiffened; for a sluggish current of heated air bore to his sensitive nostrils an—to him unmistakable scent. Man!

At once he proposed to flee. Yet how could men be with elephants? The tiger paused with lifted foot, irresolute, puzzled. He could not understand it; for he did not know that there were elephants sunk so low as to be slaves to human beings. How could he guess that on the tea-garden where was the village to which the dead girl belonged and to which her companions had fled back there chanced to be gathered together by the

purest luck four Englishmen, the Forest Officer, the Settlement Officer and the major commanding the nearest military post, all visiting the manager of the tea estate and each having with him one or two tame elephants.

The news of the killing reached them too late on the day it happened; but before dawn on the morrow they started out to drive the forest around the spot where the unhappy Hindu lass perished. The jungle was far too thick to attempt to "beat" it in the usual way, by an extended line of elephants ridden by their mahouts hustling the tiger towards others on which the shooters would await his coming. The only course possible was the "drive"; that is, to spread out in a widely-spaced single rank, the animals bearing the gunmen dotted between the others, and advance through the undergrowth near the scene of the tragedy in the hope of stumbling on the slayer sleeping close to the remains of his victim.

They nearly had him, too. Puzzled by the unusual movements of the elephants and the strange combination of their scent with that of men, undecided in which direction to slink off, since the sounds of their noisy movements echoed all round him, the tiger lingered almost too long. He caught sight of a tall tusker and stared in amazement at its strange appearance, until it dawned on him that this was due to the fact that two men were seated on it. Amazed but grasping the significance of this, he sprang like a flash towards a patch of thick cover—and, as he plunged into it, felt a searing pain along his side, while a strange sound like a clap of thunder filled the forest. A bullet had struck him, inflicting a painful fleshwound.

The tangled undergrowth gave way at the impact of the heavy body; saplings bent and the intricate network of interwoven thorny branches was burst asunder as the tiger hurled his weight at it. More than once in his wild panic he almost brained himself against the thick boles of big trees in his frenzied flight; but each time he just saved himself by an instinctive swerve.

For miles he rushed on blindly, spurred by terror and the ache of his wound, which, although not dangerous, was very painful. Blundering through the tangled undergrowth, bounding across the bracken-clad open glades, jumping the fissured courses of dry rivulet-beds, leaping down into the deeper nullahs and clambering up their



"A rustle in the undergrowth by the roadside, an agonized shrick as a huge body leapt out of hiding and with a lightning rush sprang at the unhappy woman"

precipitous banks, he fled from the fear that gripped him, the fear of death that he had inspired men and beasts with but had never felt himself before.

At last exhaustion overcame even his powerful frame and slackened his speed. But he still forced his way through the impeding vegetation, although more slowly now, and kept on with heaving flanks and

dripping tongue.

A raging thirst tormented him. When at last the welcome scent of water reached his nostrils and he sprang down into the bed of a stream that still held water, he plunged in belly-deep and lapped feverishly, pausing often and lifting his head to listen and look about him in fear. Wading across he climbed to the opposite bank and, heavy with his drink, went on, but slower now and stumbling with fatigue; until at length he could go no farther and dropped utterly exhausted in thick cover.

There he lay, panting, licking his wound and quivering with terror that made him prick up his ears at every fancied sound. But he had far outdistanced pursuit; and at last his tired head dropped on his paws, and, his heart thumping against his ribs, he rested and tried to puzzle out what had

happened.

He could not understand the reason of this unprovoked attack. He had no quarrel with the elephants; and how could he comprehend that, because he had slain some human beings, others should seek him out unprovoked and attack him? He was conscious of no crime. He had only obeyed the Law of the Jungle—Kill or Be Killed; to the Stronger the Victory. All creatures in the forest preyed on each other; why should he not devour these weaker two-legged things? The riddle was too hard for him. His eyes flickered, closed, opened, then shut again; and he slept the sleep of the weary in the deep silence of the jungle.

A man-eater is made, not born. Tigers have the same dread of human beings as other creatures of the wild and will turn aside from them, even sometimes withdraw growlingly from a kill if intruded on by them. It needs an accidental happening or some very strong impulse to overcome this fear. The woodland murderer of women who now lay sleeping in sheer exhaustion had begun his career like the other jungle-dwellers of his race by hunting the deer and wild pig roaming the forest. Once, when he was chasing a sambhur hind, a sharp splinter of a broken bamboo stem had run deep into his

paw; and the wound festering lamed him for weeks.

Unable to run down his usual quarry, he was limping hungrily one day through a part of the jungle strange to him, when he found himself close to a village. The habitations of men were rare in the forest, and he had hitherto kept clear of them. But starvation makes desperate; and in the scrub near the huts a few lean cows were grazing. Belly to earth he crawled stealthily upwind to them and sprang on a young heifer which, when it had caught sight of him, only stared stupidly at him, instead of bolting at once as the more wary deer would have done. other cows, before scampering off with uplifted tails, stood gazing just as foolishly at the strange apparition long enough to enable him to attack them had he wished. But he contented himself with the one victim, which he lifted and bore away into the jungle with surprising strength.

The ease with which he had made his catch turned him from game-killer to cattle-thief; for he found beef easier to come at than venison and quite as palatable. So he haunted this forest hamlet and others in turn, lying in wait for the cows, which were taken out by children to graze every morning and driven back at night to be shut up in

the byres.

He grew used to seeing from his hidingplace human beings passing and repassing, and so lost his fear of them. On one occasion he burst out of the undergrowth on a small herd of cattle, trusting to his sudden appearance having its usual effect of paralysing the scared animals and holding them until he could select and pull one of them down. But this day the youth in charge was between him and the cows. Like most natives he had little fear of tigers, because usually they are harmless to men; and so he ran with uplifted cudgel at the cattle-thief, shouting loudly in the hope of scaring him.

But the striped brute was starving; for luck had been against him and he had gone hungry for three days. So, furious at the interference with his meal, he turned on the rash boy and struck him lifeless to the ground. But the lad's self-sacrifice was not unavailing, for the cattle were alarmed and bolted; and the disappointed beast, standing over the motionless form, glared in angry despair after them. Then the smell of the blood of his human victim reached his nostrils and suggested that possibly this new prey might satisfy his hunger; so he gripped the body in his jaws and limped off with it

into the jungle. And thus was a man-eater made.

This accidental killing taught him that of all animals human beings were the easiest to The wild pigs and the deer needed careful stalking; while a stout old boar with razor-edged tusks and a sambhur stag, the thrust of whose sharp antlers were backed by the weight of an animal fourteen hands high, were formidable foes. The young of bison, buffalo and elephant were tasty morsels and easily overcome, if only they could be caught at a safe distance from the adults but that rarely happened, of the herd: unfortunately. Monkeys were toothsome mouthfuls, if one could catch them on the ground, which was seldom.

Human beings, however, in the shape of the men, women and children who walked unarmed through the jungle or loitered around the forest villages, were defenceless, slow of foot, and could neither run away nor climb trees quickly enough to escape even a

lame tiger.

So this one set himself to prowling round the hamlets at dusk and haunting the paths through the trees by day, and took toll of the forest dwellers. The number of his victims rose slowly, much too slowly for him; for, after the first few deaths, the panic-stricken villagers grew careful and avoided going out except in parties. With all their precautions the tiger still found victims, but not enough to satisfy him; so he had to eke out the supply by the deer and pig.

Changing his hunting-ground he had come to the made road, where fortune at first seemed to favour him, since he made a couple of kills in the first two days. Hitherto his slaying had been done far from the haunts of white men, who had both power and inclination to punish him for what they held to be crime; although he was but obeying the first law of Nature in finding

food where he could.

But the death of the girl brought the intervention of the avengers from whom he had so

narrowly escaped.

At the first sounds of the dawning day he awoke with a start to the realisation of fear again; and it sent him fleeing with the wild thought of putting as many leagues of jungle between him and his mysterious assailants as he could. His wound pained him, his limbs were stiff; but the impulse of terror drove him steadily on and he loped swiftly away from the mountains.

Before noon he saw daylight between the

trunks of the trees and slackened his pace cautiously. The undergrowth grew thicker; so, slowing down to a cautious walk, he stole forward through the bushes and suddenly found himself looking out on a road again. He drew back at the sight of it, for it seemed as though he had come on the scene of his disaster; and he listened instinctively for the sounds of the approaching elephants.

But all was still about him and he ventured to peer out. The road lay white and empty in the strong sunlight; and beyond it rose up the dark wall of the trees again. But between the two and parallel to them ran two shining ribbons glistening in the sunshine; and the glitter of them caught the tiger's eyes and puzzled him. For he had never seen a railway before and now was looking on the line that, coming from the open plains of Eastern Bengal, pierces the forest to end at Jainti at the foot of the mountains, where it would meet the bullock-carts on the Hathipota road from the tea-gardens and carry the lead-lined wooden cases another stage of their long journey.

As the lurking beast blinked through the screening foliage at the gleaming steel rails a sudden sound struck his ears; and, quivering with excitement, he turned his great head to look up the road. For he heard voices; and along the dusty thoroughfare came two figures, a man and a woman, the latter balancing a heavy bundle on her head and shuffling along on bare feet behind her unburdened husband. At sight of them the tiger was instantly assailed by a griping hunger; and with twitching nostrils he drew himself noiselessly inch by inch closer to the thin screen of leaves that hid him from the road. His prey was delivered into his claws.

Unconscious of the lurking doom the two Indians trudged on in the dust towards his hiding-place; and the muscles in the great limbs gathered under the yellow and black body grew tense as once more the man-eater crouched for a fatal spring. The couple came abreast of him, the husband flinging an occasional careless word over his shoulder to the heavy-laden woman behind.

Then with a sudden rustle the green curtains of the screening bushes parted and out on the unhappy wife leaped the yellow brute. One blow of the great paw drove her lifeless to the earth. The man ran screaming in terror; but, as he reached the railway track, the tiger was upon him and, rising on hindlegs, struck him down. Then, his sharp claws piercing the brown skin, the slayer

stood over his victim and looked around with a fierce snarl, as if defying the world to take his prey from him.

His challenge was instantly answered. There was a dull rumble, ever growing louder, the ground under him shook; and, as the astonished tiger turned his head, round a curve of the shining rails between the walls of trees a huge monster rushed on him with a deafening roar.

The dismayed man-eater drew back snarlingly, his ears flattened, his white teeth showing in the threatening scowl that he used to daunt his foes. But with a courage born of hunger he refused to abandon his prey and turned to face the onrush of this amazing enemy, which with shining eyes bore straight down on him, vomiting sparks and smoke, the earth trembling at its coming.

And the engine-driver of the daily passenger train of this unfrequented railway, looking out through the round glass windows of his cab, saw the tiger standing with bristling hair and bared fangs in the middle of the track, facing the locomotive with desperate valour. It was between him and the huddled-up body lying on the permanent The man was used to the sight of the beasts of the jungle on the line. now he had had to halt his train for hours, because a solitary bull elephant had chosen to take his midday siesta standing across the rails and it would have been unwise to risk a collision with its great bulk. One driver of a pilot-engine had tried it to his

cost. The engine was derailed, and he spent the next six weeks in hospital.¹

But this smaller beast was another matter; so, without checking speed, the man gave a piercing blast of the steam-whistle and held on, expecting to see the tiger leap aside and plunge into the forest. And at that moment he caught sight of the prostrate woman in the road and saw her husband's body in front of him. The sight filled him with anger; and, no longer content with scaring the tiger off the line, he increased to the utmost the speed of his locomotive in the wild hope of running the murderer down, but never really expecting to do so.

The mad shriek of the whistle had proved too much for the man-eater's nerves, and, just as the engine was almost on him, he jumped round and bolted, but, instead of leaving the track, raced straight on wildly in front of the train. For naturally he thought only of outdistancing the terrible pursuer and believed it could follow him in any direction.

Fast as he fled, it came faster; and with the courage of despair he stopped and turned savagely on the strange monster pursuing him.

Only the driver felt the shock as the engine caught the tiger up, shattered and hurled him aside, the life crushed out of the broken body. Man's handiwork had avenged Man. The Law of the Jungle had been obeyed; to the Strongest the Victory.

1 A fact.

THE FOUR WINDS.

THE North Wind scars the forest track;
Blind in the fury of his haste
He lays the world-wide garden waste.

The South Wind lures the swallow back, The dandelions' brazen shields, And day-pied carpets for the fields.

The East Wind with his ivory fangs Snaps at the lily as he strides Snarling along the river-sides.

The West Wind in her frolic hangs
Bright garlands in the orchard-close
And to my garden flings a rose!

PERCY HASELDEN.

THE WISDOM OF MARIANNE

By A. WHATOFF ALLEN

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

ITH hands clasped round a pair of shapely, silk-closd and chin resting on her knees, Marianne sat motionless on an empty petrol can and gazed thoughtfully at the rainbow colours in a pool of oil a few inches beyond the tips of her patent shoes.

"You see my point, Donald, don't you?" she said, addressing, it seemed, the

back axle of the two-seater.

From the neighbourhood of the differential came the sound of heavy breathing and the clink of metal against metal; and then a spanner shot from beneath the car and went clanking across the garage floor, to be followed, in more leisurely fashion, by a long, lean, oil-spattered figure.

"Marianne," he said, drawing up a box and seating himself beside her, "when a man has been sandwiched for twenty minutes between a differential gear and a cold stone floor, labouring to loosen an immovable nut, and then discovers that for twenty minutes he has been strenuously tightening it, what would you consider an apt and adequate remark?"

She shrugged her shoulders and tapped the floor impatiently with her foot.

"Try a cigarette, Donald," she suggested,

"and then answer my question."

"Marianne," he said, as he threw away the match, "my vision, perhaps, is blurred with mobiloil, but I can see only Marianne, blue-eyed and golden-haired, sitting on a petrol can and looking immensely pathetic. If my paws weren't grimed and greasy, I should take her baby hand in mine and comfort her."

"But you must see, Donald," she insisted. "You must see things as they really are, and be practical and sensible about them, as—as I am. It's trying for both of us, but we can't help it. It isn't our fault. If your uncle——"

"I hope, Marianne," he interrupted fervently, "that my late unlamented uncle is eternally condemned to loosen immovable nuts by turning them the wrong way. It's less than he deserves."

She nodded and gazed wistfully again at

the pool of oil.

"I suppose there's no way of getting round it?" she asked. "The will, I

He shook his head gloomily.

"It's too horribly clear," he told her. "I have the income only so long as I make no effort to add to it. Some queer, misguided notion about not making more money than one needs."

"As if one could!" she sighed.

"And then I've got to marry," he went "Uncle believed in young men marrying; steadies them or settles them down or something. The income stops unless I marry before I'm twenty-five."

"And you're twenty-five in a month, Donald," she reminded him.

He nodded. "And I adore you, Marianne."

"And I adore you, Donald. It's tragic the way we adore each other. If only we weren't so expensive! But we are—we're prohibitive, both of us; and we've got to face the facts. You can't afford to marry me. Truthfully, Donald, can you?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"With a bit of scraping—" he began,

but she shook her head.

"You can scarcely manage to keep your-self as it is," she sighed. "You haven't simple tastes, Donald. You must have your car and your golf and your winter sports and your silk underwear. You couldn't scrape. You'd be miserable with flannel next your skin. Besides, love won't stand scraping; it's a flower, Donald, not a potato."

"There's work," he said dejectedly.

"Of course, I'd lose my income if I began to earn; but for Marianne—Marianne of the baby hands—I'd start at the bottom of the ladder and climb and climb—I grow dizzy at the thought of the heights I could attain for Marianne, and if Marianne would wait——"

"Donald," she said sadly, "I'm already nearly twenty-two."

He nodded sympathetically.

"But you don't look it, Marianne," he comforted. "You still look quite young. If I began to climb now——"

Again she shook her head.

"Dear Donald!" she sighed. "But I don't think you'd cut much of a figure on a ladder—at least, not a sufficiently imposing figure to be able to afford me. You see, I'm like you; I haven't simple tastes. I must have my pretty frocks and my silk stockings and my crêpe-de-Chine und—my crêpe-de-Chine, and my goodness-knows-how-many-guineas hats and my heaven-alone-knows-how-much shoes. And then there's the winter in Cairo, and the autumn in Cannes, and Ascot and Goodwood and Cowes—But hadn't I better stop, Donald?"

"Please, Marianne."

She nodded. "And Aunt Anna won't give way," she went on. "She doesn't consider you a good match, Donald, and if I marry you she cuts me off with a shilling." She spread out her hands in despairing protest. "How far do you imagine a shilling would take us, Donald?"

"About as far as the Elephant and Castle, Marianne—on an omnibus," he

admitted.

For a few moments there was silence in the garage, while Marianne frowned at the floor, and Donald, puffing meditatively at his cigarette, speculated whether hair could possibly be woven of silk and sunshine. Then:

"A poky red-brick villa in a row of poky red-brick villas," murmured Marianne, "with the milkman calling at the front door and a tuneless piano across the way; the cinema on a Saturday night and a bus ride on a Sunday; and all the rest of the week butchers' bills and washing days and darning socks." She turned to him suddenly. "What on earth would you think, Donald, if I darned your socks?"

"I should admire your self-restraint,

Marianne."

"It wouldn't do, Donald," she said, shaking her head. "We mustn't dream of

marrying. It's sheer folly. We'd be wretched in a week. As we are, we adore each other; married——"

"But I must marry," he reminded her.



"Or climb ladders. The only ladder I'd dream of climbing is one that leads to Marianne."

She turned to him again and laid a hand on his sleeve.

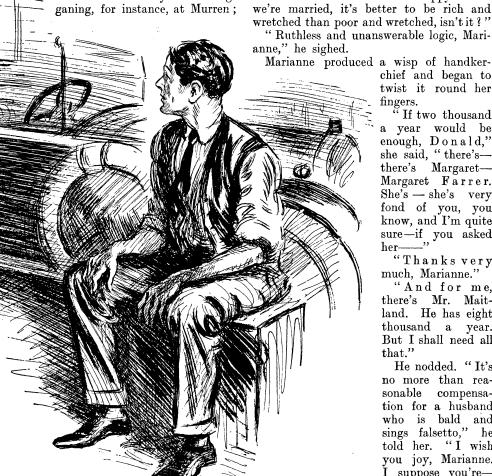
"Donald dear, we're going to be sensible and practical and level-headed and sane," she said. "At least, I think we are. Either that or sublimely noble and self-sacrificing. We're both going to marry. Not each other, of course. We can't afford each other, so we'll each marry someone who can afford us. It's the only sensible solution. I've thought it all out. I've found an eligible wife for you and an eligible husband for myself, each with plenty of money——"

"Marianne," he said reproachfully, "this is mere commerce—a vulgar traffic in love. If I thought you were serious——"

"But I am," she assured him. "We're going to be cold and calculating and mercenary. Beggars with expensive tastes can't be choosers, and they can't afford to

be sentimental. So we're going to be brave about it, and have stiff upper lips and determined jaws and all that sort of thing, and take the only sensible course. I don't think there'll be any need for us to forget each other. I daresay I shall think of you when I'm at Cannes, and if I feel a

little remorseful, I shall remind myself that Cannes is better than Margate. And perhaps you'll have a pang sometimes—when you're tobog-



"'If it means that Marianne won't marry me--' he began."

and then you'll remember that, after all, the snow is better there than on Hampstead Heath. And then we shall both pat ourselves on the back and tell ourselves how very wise and sensible and— No, please don't interrupt, Donald. If I stop talking I shall probably howl, and that would ruin everything. We simply must be sensible, and remember that nowadays people like us don't marry just because they happen to love each other. Love's rather out of fashion, you know. Ours will be marriages of convenience, and we shall be ever so much happier than if we had to scrape and pinch and were always longing for things we couldn't have. I'd never be really happy if I were poor. Nor would you, Donald, would you?"

"Sad, but true, Marianne," he admitted.

"And even if we're unhappy when we're married, it's better to be rich and wretched than poor and wretched, isn't it?"

"Ruthless and unanswerable logic, Mari-

chief and began to twist it round her

fingers.

"If two thousand a year would be enough, Donald," she said, "there's—there's Margaret— Margaret Farrer. She's — she's very fond of you, you know, and I'm quite sure—if you asked her——"

"Thanks very much, Marianne."

"And for me, there's Mr. Maitland. He has eight thousand a year. But I shall need all that."

He nodded. "It's no more than reasonable compensation for a husband who is bald and sings falsetto," he told her. "I wish you joy, Marianne. I suppose you're he's—I mean, he'll bite all right, will he ? "

"I've only to give him half a chance," she answered, with a satisfied smile, "and I'm going to give him a whole one."

She rose, smoothing the creases from her dress, and smiled at him.

"So it's all settled, Donald, isn't it?" she said.

"If it means that Marianne won't marry me-" he began.

"'Can't,' Donald; not 'won't,' " she corrected.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"The result is the same, Marianne. If you and I are not to be married, it doesn't in the least matter to me whom I marry. Margaret Farrer will do as well as anyone—rather better than most. Since I must marry someone, I'll ask her, if you insist. But I'm sorry Queen Elizabeth isn't alive. She's the only woman, bar Marianne, I've ever really wanted to marry, and I could at least have felt that I was ennobling myself. As it is, I don't feel particularly noble, Marianne."

"This is business, Donald," she explained.
"You don't have to feel noble in business.
You have to be cold and calculating and businesslike. Margaret is coming to Aunt Anna's dance next week, and you had better

ask her then."

"Ladies first, please, Marianne," he said.
"When I know that Maitland has bitten I'll consider approaching Margaret. I'd hate

to see you left on the shelf."

"Dear Donald!" she sighed. "But Mr. Maitland is coming to the dance, too. I'll give him his chance then as soon as I'm quite sure that you and Margaret—Donald, we'd better do it together."

"Together? You mean, of course, simul-

taneously?"

She nodded. "It'll make it easier—for you."

He sighed, rose from his seat, and followed

her to the door of the garage.

"Promise, Donald?" she demanded.

"Of course," he answered, lighting another cigarette, "if it will make you happy."

She shot him a quick glance, turned from him abruptly, and slipped out of the garage.

Half-way along the drive she paused and stood irresolute, glancing over her shoulder towards the garage and gnawing the wisp of handkerchief that was twisted round her finger. Then, with a shrug of her shoulders, she strode resolutely towards the gate.

It was at that moment that Donald, with one watering eye exposed to the draught that blew through the crack of the garage door, swung suddenly round and did a futile thing. It is hardly conceivable that anyone should be absurd enough to kick a motor-car, yet the dent which still disfigures the rear off mudguard of Donald's two-seater is evidence that it is sometimes done.

During the week-end that intervened between the momentous interview in the garage and the day of Aunt Anna's dance, Donald's sense of nobility suffered no increase. Most of the time he spent on the golf links, thinking more of Marianne than of bogey; with the result that, when he finally abandoned golf as powerless to increase his sense of self-respect, the breaking of two club records—that for the largest number of lost balls and the highest number of strokes per round respectively—was the total of his achievement.

But his determination did not weaken. "Cold and calculating," Marianne had said, Marianne was obviously Marianne was lost to him. In her own irresponsible way she had made that fact abundantly clear. But to refuse for that reason to marry someone else, and thereby lose a perfectly good income—for one as well as a perfectly adorable wife, was sheer sentimental idiocy. Regarded coldly and calculatingly, the fact of being rejected by one girl was the most convincing reason possible for marrying another, particularly when she was endowed with two thousand a year. Margaret Farrer was a thoroughly good investment. He didn't, of course, love—— But Marianne had explained all that. It was a marriage of convenience, a purely business matter, a bargain, a quid pro quo. As a matter of fact, Donald reflected with a wry smile, it was a couple of thousand quid pro quo; and, since there was no question of love, it was perfectly honourable to hope that it was free of income Yes, he must certainly see it through, with stiff upper lip and determined jaw and all that sort of thing. Marianne was very wise, and if she could do it, so could he. Of course, if Marianne should change her mind . . .

But that evening, when Marianne, in a goodness-knows-how-many-guineas dress and a pair of heaven-alone-knows-how-much shoes, floated into the ball-room, there was a grimness about the set of her jaw and a gleam of defiance in her eyes as she smiled her greeting to him, which convinced him that the game of cold calculation was to be played relentlessly to the end.

They danced the first dance together, but it was not until they had twice circled the room that either of them spoke. Then:

"Donald!"

"Yes, Marianne?"

"Mr. Maitland is here."

He nodded. "I saw him in the hall," he

told her. "It was an inspiring sight, Marianne, and I have decided to give you an egg-boiler."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Seen Margaret anywhere?" "She's in green—a perfectly inquired. gorgeous dress—silk and——"

Again he nodded. "It rustles like bank-

notes," he said.

They danced on in silence, Marianne with closed eyes and hard lips, and Donald with a face unsmiling and expressionless.

When the music stopped, they sat together on the stairs, Marianne a step above him, so that it was hard for her not to see the ungovernable tuft of hair that reared itself on the crown of his head, and the thin red furrow across the back of his neck where his collar had pressed. But she turned her eyes resolutely away.

"No shirking, Donald," she said.

He glanced up at her with raised eyebrows, thrust forward his chin, and slowly traced the line of his jaw with the tip of a finger.

"And observe the upper lip," he said. She glanced at him between half-closed eyes and nodded approvingly, while the hint of a smile flickered round her mouth and vanished.

"In my waistcoat pocket, Marianne, is a ring of lustrous jewels," he added. "I'll show you."

But she turned her head sharply and

brushed his hand away from her.

"I'm dancing the fifth and sixth dances with Mr. Maitland," she announced.

"Dancing, Marianne?"

"Well, spending, if you like," she said. "Margaret is keeping the same numbers for you. I asked her to. You—you understand?"

He nodded and, as the music started again, rose, gave her his hand, helped her to her feet, and stood gazing at her searchingly. For a moment she met his glance, and then she lowered her eyes and spread out her hands in a gesture of resignation.

"Donald," she said, "it's the only sensible solution, and you know it. We mustn't

be silly about it."

"Wise Marianne!" he exclaimed, with a mocking smile. "Infinitely wise Marianne!"

He turned from her, but she caught him by the sleeve.

"Donald, you're—you're not backing

He shook his head. "But too much

wisdom gives me cramp in the jaw," he explained. "Come and dance again. It's a tune from 'The Beggar's Opera.'"

As the orchestra struck up for the fifth dance, Donald glanced hastily round the room, caught a glimpse of a green silk dress at the further end, stood for a moment irresolute, with finger and thumb thrust into the pocket of his waistcoat, and then turned abruptly and strode towards the door that led into the hall. But at the door he came to a sudden halt, and stood aside, with downcast eyes, to make way for Marianne-Marianne who, in her infinite wisdom, clung confidingly to the arm of Maitland and glanced shyly up at him with a pair of radiant blue eyes.

She stopped when she saw Donald and touched his arm lightly with her fan.

"Looking for Margaret?" she inquired. "She's over there—by the fireplace—waiting for you."

She passed on with a smile and a nod. Donald watched her as, still clinging to Maitland's arm, she crossed the dancing floor, paused for a moment, fanning herself languidly, and strolled with him through the door on the opposite side of the room. And then, with another furtive glance towards the green silk dress, he scurried into the hall and took refuge in an arm-chair behind a screen.

And there, tapping a cigarette against the back of his hand, he sat and glared at nothing in particular until he realised that the laughter and chatter around him, which he had vaguely recognised as meaning that the fifth dance was over, had ceased, that the band was playing again, and that the sixth dance was in progress.

Then he rose, crumpled the cigarette in his fingers, remembered that Margaret, in a green silk dress that rustled like banknotes, was waiting partnerless by the fireplace, and hurried towards the ball-room.

At the door he again came to a sudden halt, and stood aside to make way for Marianne and Maitland. But this time she did not pause. She glanced at him, her cheeks flushed, her eyes triumphant, but with that same hardness still clinging to her lips, and, as she passed, slowly raised her left hand to touch her hair.

Unconsciously, Donald watched her hand as she raised it, caught the glitter of gold and the sparkle of diamonds, and then turned abruptly and strode towards the fireplace.

But Margaret was not there, nor, as far slowly across the room. As he passed the as he could see, was she dancing. He spot where Marianne was sitting he paused turned to the French windows that opened ever so slightly, and his glance, meeting into the conservatory, glanced within, hers, directed it to Margaret's left hand. He caught a glimpse of the green silk dress, felt again in his waistcoat pocket, and then stepped resolutely forward. Only Margaret was there. He seated himself beside her. It was not until the end of the seventh dance that he again entered the ball-room, and then, with Margaret's right arm slipped through his, and a satisfied smile on his face, he strolled

"At the door he again came to a sudden halt, and stood aside to make way for Marianne and Maitland."

knew by the tinge of colour that flashed into Marianne's cheek that she had not failed to notice the lustrous ring that encircled Margaret's most momentous finger.

He danced no more with Marianne. As

Once again a long, lean, oil-spattered figure emerged from beneath the car, drew up a box, and seated himself beside her.

"Well, Marianne?"



with obstinate nuts beneath his twoseater when, the following morning, Marianne stepped nervously across the garage, seated herself on an empty petrol can, and gazed thoughtfully at the rainbow colours in a pool of oil.

"Donald!" she said.
"Hullo, Marianne!"

"Couldn't you—come out—for a minute?"

She bit her lip and glared intently at her shoes.

"Donald, I—I hope—you'll be—happy."

"Thanks, Marianne. If wisdom makes for happiness——"

She cut him short with a swift gesture. "You must be happy, Donald," she said with sudden intentness. "You must. If

you're unhappy now, it—it'll all have been for nothing. I must tell you. I want you to know. I want you to realise that I cared so much that—that I couldn't do it. I couldn't be wise. I couldn't make myself be wise. It seemed so—so cold and calculating and mercenary. And Mr. Maitland is bald, and he does sing falsetto, and—and I shoved him on to Aunt Anna after a few moments and went and ate four ices."

"That was both cold and calculating,

Marianne," he said reproachfully.

"But I didn't want to—to spoil your chances," she went on. "I knew you'd shirk if I let you know I had, and I didn't want you to be silly too. So I took a ring from Aunt Anna's jewel-box and put it on and let you see it. And then you glared, and dashed off to Margaret, and—and I do really and truly hope you'll be terrifically happy."

Again she was twisting a wisp of handkerchief round her fingers. He leaned forward, took it from her, and slipped it

into his pocket.

"Marianne," he said, "Marianne of the infinite wisdom, listen to me, and don't twiddle about with your fingers. I see now that it's all your fault. You're too wise—much too wise—even for nearly twenty-two. It was you and your confounded wisdom that made me rush like a bull into the conservatory, hurl myself on the couch beside Margaret, and almost make a complete and utter ass of myself."

She glanced up at him sharply.

"I was just about to grasp her little hand in my manly paw and slip the lustrous ring on her finger, when I realised that the site was already occupied. Margaret, to my horror and chagrin, was already engaged."

"Donald! But how—who——"

He smiled. "I was the first to be told," he explained. "It had only just occurred, I fancy, and Margaret was swelling with pride to such an extent that she simply had to tell someone. Though what cause for pride there is in the acquisition of a husband who is bald and sings falsetto—"

"Mr. Maitland!" she gasped.

He nodded.

For a moment there was silence. Then:

"Donald!"

"Yes, Marianne?"

"Margate isn't such a bad place, and as for Ascot and Goodwood and Cowes——"

But Donald was on his feet.

"Marianne," he exclaimed, "it isn't fair! It isn't fair! My hands are greasy and grimy, and I'll make a ghastly mess of your goodness-knows-how-many-guineas frock and——"

But Marianne was close to him, her hands on his shoulders, her face upturned.

"It's a dreadful old frock, Donald," she confided. "I—I put it on—on purpose—just in case——"

"Marianne," he whispered, "you are

very, very wise."

SLUMBER SONG.

CLOSE up, little eye,
As the daisies do
When there's no more blue
In the sky,
Little eye!

Drop down, little lid,
As the birds that drop
In the tall tree-top
And are hid,
Little lid!

Close up, little mouth,
Like a buttercup
That the dew fills up
In the drouth,
Little mouth!

WILFRID THORLEY.

BARTER

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

"TRECKON I've been looking for just that ever since I came to Europe," said Carthew.

The other man glanced at him swiftly, then following his gaze at the "just that" viewed from the little green gate at which they had halted, and which was set in the high hedge of holly and clipped beech that had hitherto hidden all but a glimpse of

steep, red brown gable.

The house, small and old, was set among cherry trees, all pearl and bronze with full blossom and young leaf bud. There were daffodils in the grass that grew right up to grey stone walls, against which a great magnolia held its glossy leaves and ivory flowercups; the flagged path from the gate to the open door was short enough to show passers-by the beautiful panelling of the wide, low-pitched passage within—short enough, too, for them to see the face of the girl who was seated on the round stone steps of the doorway, her hands clasped around her knees, her head uplifted as she listened to the golden fluting of a blackbird in the cherry-tree. For the moment that Carthew stood there she did not move; the footsteps of the two men had made little sound on the grassy lane, and she was evidently unaware of their presence. Carthew drew a long breath as he moved away.

"It's real," he said. "Real. . . . And what I've wanted. I guess I'll take that

back with me."

"To America?" Laurence spoke almost stupidly. And he was very far from stupid.
... For the second time he gave that quick covert glance at the hard, tanned face of the man beside him. Carthew, grave but triumphant, was looking straight ahead.

"You've said it. I'm sailing in four weeks. I guess there's time. Who is the

lady?"

For a moment Laurence did not answer. He had a ridiculous vision of this grave, cool person, known in the village as "the gentleman from Meriky," forcibly carrying off the lady who, it appeared, was "just that" for which he had been looking ever since he had come to Europe—and the vision made so little appeal to Major Laurence that he did not even see its absurdity. He had an odd conviction that, for all his quick grasp of situations and his equally swift decisions, Carthew was also capable of waiting a long time for what he wanted . . . sure of it in the end.

He waited now for Laurence's answer, walking on down the grassy lane, and Laurence, recovering somewhat from the annoyance of that absurd vision, said rather stiffly:

"That is Miss Naomi Grainger. All the land round here belonged to the Graingers once. They had the old Manor until six years ago—when Sir Ralph, Miss Grainger's father, died. Then that had to go. Now there is only the little Dower House we have just passed, where she lives. It is small, but contains the most wonderful old oak panelling and carving. But you must have heard of that before now."

And he looked at Carthew more directly than usual.

Carthew smiled.

"Yes—I've heard of it. But only yester-day. The landlord of the Wheatsheaf said he hadn't thought I'd be interested in it. I reckon he hadn't told me because he knew the lady didn't want every stranger that happened along asking to look at it—just from curiosity."

"Well—that's quite right, you know," said Laurence quickly. "We've a saying—perhaps you've heard it—that an Englishman's house is his castle. Suppos-

ing the place was yours—"

"It's going to be mine," said Carthew in his deep, quiet voice. "That's all the difference, isn't it? I'm a prospective purchaser, not a sightseer. I'm going to buy that old panelling, and have it fixed up way back just as it is here."

Major Laurence was sufficiently relieved at this repudiation of his own vision of ten minutes ago, to allow a rather injudicious

contempt to sound in his laugh.

"I'm afraid you won't find it is as simple as you imagine. You see, the panelling doesn't happen to be for sale."

Carthew was not perturbed.

"I think perhaps it may be. At a price." There was no boastfulness in the statement, he simply made it that the Englishman should realise exactly how things stood—

later when he walked up the path between the cherry-trees. The door was again open, and in the mellow, golden sunlight of the April afternoon the panelling within, gleaming and dark with age, made a background for the slim figure of a girl in a russet gown.

Carthew got a swift impression of gracious poise and clear, warm colouring as he lifted



"'I reckon I've been looking for just that ever since I came to Europe,' said Carthew."

how, material results endowed him, having "hustled," and grasped the golden opportunities offered by the Golden West, with the power to be generous over a transaction which might already be regarded as an accomplished fact. He would interview Miss Naomi Grainger no later than that same afternoon—though he did not find it necessary to tell Major Laurence that.

It was, indeed, little more than an hour

his hat and prepared to state his errand. That he wished to see the panelling of the Dower House did not, it seemed, cause Miss Grainger any surprise. Remote as the little village among the hills stood, there had on two or three previous occasions been visitors who had craved a like permission. Intuition approved Carthew's credentials; with a serene and charming grace she led the way from room to room, pausing to point out

some particular piece of carving—the exquisite trail of flowers and fruit on the high mantelshelf that only the chisel of Grinling Gibbons could have wrought; some entwined initials, rudely cut, above a yet earlier date, and all the time Carthew, although subconsciously aware of the pleasant quality of her low, clear voice, yet scarcely heeded

"Fix things? I'm afraid I don't understand. . . ."

"I mean—have this valued and—and come to terms." Carthew's voice was grave and confident and businesslike. "I want to buy it."

"It is not for sale."

She spoke quite gently and graciously,



the girl who spoke—the girl whom Major Laurence had imagined to be the object of that interest actually inspired by the panelling. . . . This, indeed, did not belie his first enthusiasm. At the end of his tour Carthew turned to Naomi gravely.

"It is — magnificent. And now — may we get to business? I'm sailing in the Atalanta on the twenty-third of May. Do you think we could fix things right away?"

For a moment she stared at him with wide and puzzled eyes.

and looking at her Carthew felt sure she hadn't understood.

"Not the house, you know. I mean all this—the panelling and woodwork of the interior. I've been looking for just that for some time. And now I've found it. It's great. I want to have it fixed up just so over in the West."

"Oh!... I am sorry. But I have no intention of selling the panelling." She looked at him for the first time with a touch of cold imperiousness in her manner, but Carthew met her glance with equable good humour.

"Please think it over," he said coolly.
"And I'll come again to-morrow." His gaze went back to the carved mantelshelf near which she stood and he added rather abruptly, "I reckon I understand a fair deal. . . . At whatever this is valued—I'll double that—and then you must tell me just how you'd like the place fixed up, and I will see that your plans are carried out exactly to your wishes—"

"There is no necessity to think of that—no necessity to discuss the matter at all. I hope you will find some satisfactory... bargain for your money elsewhere."

She stood very straight and still by the mantelshelf, and as she spoke she saw him glance involuntarily round the room, as if its bareness and shabbiness were upholding his cause and deriding hers. Actually, he was so far from intending that she should interpret that glance, that he did not imagine she had done so. Her words and their tone, still coldly serene, aroused his fighting spirit. He had wanted the panelling genuinely enough before, he was now determined to buy it.

The glance of Miss Grainger showed him

the way out.

On the threshold he paused.

"I won't come to-morrow, after all. I'll give you twenty-four hours. Don't want to **T**ush you. . . ."

He was as sure as that!

When the gate in the high hedge had shut behind him, Naomi Grainger went back to the beautiful, bare room that had witnessed the chief part of their utterly amazing interview, and stood there with her head high and her hands clenched at her sides.

Dancing shadows of leaf and branch from without moved on the sunlit wall; that same sunlight that drew forth the rich and mellow tints of the polished wood revealed also the threadbare shabbiness of the chintz that had once been brave in delicate rose and lavender and apple-green, the complete absence of picture or china or silver which, while the very character of the room rendered it less of a lack, yet spoke eloquently enough of that irrevocable descent of the Grainger fortunes.

All this Carthew had seen and understood . . . and had dared to imagine that it would make his offer welcome.

Other Americans had done the same other family treasures of the Old World had been transplanted to the New—yet surely never had there been a would-be purchaser so coldly, ruthlessly confident in the face of definite discouragement as this man with the hard brown countenance and gently drawling voice. . . . He had told her that he would double the value declared by an expert, and somehow she had not the slightest doubt that he would uphold his word in this and in all things.

Not that she meant him to have any opportunity for proving his qualities to her—she would never, never see him again; he could not imagine that she would agree to his cool proposal of returning in twenty-four hours after she had told him quite definitely that she had no intention of selling.

If only she could have admitted that she had no need! Her thoughts went to a letter she had received that morning, and the indignation in her eyes changed to unhappiness that held something of fear.

It was thus that Major Laurence found her, coming in unannounced as by right of long custom—for as a boy he had stayed much with his uncle at the rectory, in those days when Sir Ralph was alive and the Graingers at the Manor; and returning after the War he had taken a small house for hunting in the neighbourhood—and had so renewed his acquaintanceship with Naomi Grainger.

He said, "Hello, Naomi. I've brought that book you were speaking of . . ." and smiled as he held it out to her. But the smile hid a keen glance, and after a moment he added abruptly, "You know, you're looking rather rattled about something. . . . Surely our American visitor didn't come here worryin' you to let him see the panelling?"

She gave a little laugh, vaguely conscious that she didn't want to discuss the subject with Austin Laurence at all, yet provoked by the memory of Carthew's insufferable attitude, to vindicate her own appearance of being "rather rattled."

"He wasn't content with seeing it—he is convinced it is already his," she said. And there was a frosty bitterness in her usually serene voice that was new to Laurence.

"He spoke to me about it. Of course I told him it wasn't for sale. He had no business to come here bothering you after that——"

His indignation on her behalf was of course entirely praiseworthy, yet somehow, it seemed, Naomi was not altogether appreciative. She looked at him suddenly, at his fair, good-humoured face which wore a becoming frown of concern at the American's defection, but she felt no understanding

gratitude towards him, and at his next words the colour went out of her face.

Moving across to the fireplace and flicking his booted leg with his riding-whip, he asked casually when she had last heard from Dennis?

"I heard this morning."

"Good. . . . He's still in Florida? Fit and doin' well?"

"Quite fit. . . . Yes, he is still in Florida."

Her voice was quiet at the cost of fingers clenched on the crumpled letter in her pocket. Her courage even contrived a smile. But she knew that it could not deceive him altogether, that despite her efforts he was aware that the news in Dennis's letter was much as usual . . . failure and ill-luck, coupled with an unfortunate inability to profit by opportunity. . . .

He looked at her thoughtfully.

"I am sure he understands the—arrangement was not indefinite. . . . Three years was our agreement—and it is now nearly six."

"He has been—unfortunate. Otherwise—you know he would have repaid you—long ago."

He shrugged and said no more. But to Naomi it had been enough—a warning she had dreaded, yet deliberately put aside, because she did not seek the unpleasant characteristics in other people's natures—and she had known Austin Laurence so long. . . .

"You know I want you to marry me."

Out of the brief silence she heard his voice, and for a moment the assurance of it recalled that other which, less than an hour ago, had announced the American's determination. . . Yet, even as the comparison occurred to her, she knew that it was false. Both men had been coolly confident of obtaining what they wanted, but behind Laurence's confidence was a subtle sense of satisfaction that jarred her oddly. For she knew now, as plainly as if he had told her, what her refusal would mean with regard to that long-standing debt of Dennis's; the intangible fear had become a reality involving the Grainger honour as well as the Grainger fortunes.

And Austin Laurence, standing there by the carved mantelpiece, smiled as he said gently:

"I am waiting for my answer, Naomi."

"I——" She caught her breath in a sudden helpless laugh, remembering that the words were the same as she had spoken

to Carthew an hour ago. "I am sorry . . ." For an instant she saw the ugliness behind

his look, then he said quietly:

"But you will—think it over. . . . And I shall come again to-morrow——" He paused. "In the meantime, I shall do nothing to disturb Dennis's peace of mind among the orange orchards of Florida. . . ."

"Oh!" She checked the involuntary cry of dismay as someone knocked at the door—welcoming the interruption when Parkin, her old servant, came with a lengthy message from the village carpenter concerning hencoops.

Austin Laurence had echoed Carthew's words—and the irony of it could provoke a smile, but at his last sentence Naomi felt

something of despair.

He went away as Carthew had done, and there followed for Naomi a long evening and a longer, sleepless night. With the first grey light of morning she wrote two letters. One, sent by hand, was received by Carthew at the Wheatsheaf a few hours later.

"I will sell you the panelling you wished to buy.

"Naomi Grainger."

For a long moment he stared at the words that declared his success and should have evoked his satisfaction. Yet after the first glance there was nothing of triumph in his face. Perhaps he was too well used to success in his business enterprises to be much impressed by this. . . . At all events, when, less than an hour later, he once more crossed the threshold of the Dower House, he was simply grave and brief and practical. . . . Before he left he had considered every conceivable point in connection with the affair; for Naomi there was nothing but dully approving acquiescence . . . and the acceptance of a cheque for two-thirds of the very considerable amount which he insisted should be the price paid. As she took it, he glanced at her oddly . . . almost as if he saw her for the first time. This, in a way, was true, for while the fate of the panelling claimed his attention, he had allowed Miss Grainger no other personality than that of ownership—and obstinacy. Yet now he said a curiously crude and awkward thing.

"I'd have been—glad—if we could have

been friends."

"But I should not," said Naomi gravely. Carthew went down the path between the

seemed somehow incredible—unconsciously,

she had always judged him from a far higher

standard than that which she accorded Major Laurence. She hated him still—but

she had his money,

panelling

On the

not been

and the

touched.

had

cherry-trees to the derisive echo of a thrush from the beech hedge.

"What a joke! If you could."

The second of Naomi's letters, having been posted, did not reach Major Austin Laurence until the afternoon. It conveyed a definite refusal from Miss Grainger and a promise that the whole of her brother Dennis's debt should be paid within the next week, and, strange to say, the second of these things pleased Major Laurence no more than the first.

Two attempts to see Naomi were unavailing; on each occasion of his riding

over she was out. On the third day he received the promised cheque, and swore softly to himself as he mounted his horse.

Carthew had arranged that the workmen should start their work of dismantling the panelled room on the fifth of May, and on that date he proposed to send the remainder of his payment; he himself would have to go to town on business for some days.

But by the twelfth neither cheque nor workmen had materialised. And on the twenty-third the Atalanta was to sail. . . .

"'I will see that your plans are carried out exactly to your wishes." twenty-second of May

For Naomi the first dull relief was followed by bewilderment, and that by dismay. That Carthew should have failed his word

The Atalanta was to sail from Southampton—and Southampton was only sixty miles away. . . . So she went . . . and at the docks came face to face with Carthew. . . .

unendurable.

she found the situation

She must have changed during those past four weeks, for the Naomi Grainger who had been coldly gracious and then coldly imperious to Carthew at the Dower House could surely never have clutched his sleeve and said:

"Oh, why?" in a breathless and unsteady voice.

this—and leave—everything—after you'd paid——"

He made no reply, but something in his face told Naomi that he could not deny

the truth of it. She stared at him with eyes that were very wide and dark, in a white little face... and then he said curtly:

"I—you must forgive me—but when you suddenly agreed to sell I knew there must be some reason—that something must have occurred. By chance I heard—of your brother and Laurence. I—guessed what it might mean to you—."

"'Oh!" The colour came flooding into her white face. "Oh! didn't you guess what I'd feel like — having your money?"

"I meant you to think I'd just failed you - and and disappeared. I knew you'd never have let me help—if you knew. You made me understand right away that I was an — outsider. Well, I reckon I was. I oughtn't to have wanted to take that panelling away from where it just belongs... I

started to fight you . . . just as I would have anyone else—and then I realised I couldn't go on that way—because you were — you were——" He broke off abruptly.

Utterly oblivious to their surroundings, Naomi Grainger stared at the man who had called himself an "outsider" and had acted like a most quixotic knight. She wanted to hear the end of that sentence . . . and prompted him:

"Because—I—was—what?"



"But you sent me the money—most of it——"

"I know. But I couldn't ship the panelling—and anyway, I'd nowhere to put it if I did."

"You said you wanted it for your house in America."

"Yes. But I haven't got one—now."

"You mean—you've—you've lost your money?"

"Most of it."

"But—" Her voice was very small and still. "But—if you knew three weeks ago—why didn't you say?... D'you mean—you couldn't have meant to go away like

Carthew made an odd little gesture of helplessness.

"Too—almighty—dear——" he said, and

looked away.

Then Naomi Grainger understood. Once more he felt her touch on his sleeve.

" Dick!"

He turned incredulously, looking down at her, and found her grey eyes shining and her mouth most grave.

"I—could be—that still—if—if—you cared," she said.



THE TOWN OF THE LITTLE GREY GABLES.

BY the barton that leads to the river, Just over the low tunnelled bridge, Stands the town of the little grey gables Built ridge upon ridge.

Up and up, so they climbed in their building, Tier on tier, so they wrought in old days, On a clining of rock those old timers Made alleys and ways.

Little Town! Saints and sinners have loved you.

Time, the weaver, has woven a thread—

So strong that it cannot be broken—

Round living and dead.

Many voices will speak of past glories;
Monk's Pool and of dim Lady Well.
Little Town! Of your mood at this present
Let a wayfarer tell.

If our eyes were not holden, then surely, Your chimney stacks rugged and steep Might show us that ministering angels Their old vigils keep.

And if tithes could be taken of mercies,
Of kindnesses store upon store,
Your barn would not hold them though crowded
From wide door to door.

For one glimpse of your old Saxon treasure, One sight of Saint Margaret's Way, One look on your broad forded valley Lone exiles still pray.

FAY INCHFAWN,

Author of "Songs of the Ups and Downs," "Through the Windows of a Little House," etc.



THE EQUIVALENT OF X

By ELIZABETH HICKES

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

HEN Claudia had been at the boarding-house twenty-four hours she decided that as soon as she had passed the Exam., and the world lay at her feet, she would leave.

She was nineteen, as nice and as pretty and as clever as nineteen-year-olds mostly are, and she was fairly good at Exams. Not tremendously good though. That had to be admitted, as the weak spot was too weak to be explained away. She was bad at Maths. Had it not been for this, there would have been no need to sit brooding over Arithmetic and Algebra night after

night in the boarding-house drawing-room. It was too cold to sit up in her room, and fires were not allowed, and you couldn't get through the Exam. without Maths., so she had to sit downstairs with the others while she prepared for her next day's class.

She tried not to listen to the talk from the arm-chairs at the other end of the room. There were five of them, four with rather old ladies in them, and one with a very old lady. The rather old ladies were named Mrs. Chappell, Mrs. Fox, Miss Grey-Watson and Miss Perrin. The very old lady was Mrs. Smeeth. Mrs. Sully, the proprietress of

the boarding-house, came in sometimes, but generally she sat downstairs, probably working out sums in housekeeping with the aid of her fingers, and dots where the figures were thickest.

Claudia was not in the least interested in the arm-chair talk. It was pretty much the same night after night, a little trickle of amiable commonplace, thirty or forty years away from the age of nineteen, but the problems of mathematics, having still less hold on her, Claudia's attention was ready to be distracted on the flimsiest invitation.

She never joined the arm-chair circle herself, at least, not till she went up to say good night. When the dullness got desperate she used to invent little conversational adventures for herself on scraps of paper spoiled already by disastrous algebraical experiments. Or she would make gibes which she wished could be felt by the hated symbols which so persistently plagued her. As for example, "Let a denote a baba-au-rhum." That would be after rice pudding at dinner. Or, more frequently, "9.30 = Downy Bed + Me." This one left out a highly important factor, usually boiled jam roll. She knew of course that trivialities of this sort were unworthy of a serious student, and always suppressed them as soon as made.

One evening a scrap of gossip from the arm-chairs reached her ears.

"Miss Perrin's birthday on Monday."
That was when Miss Perrin was out of
the room for a moment, gone to fetch a new
ball of wool.

"Yes. I suppose there will be the usual . . .?" There was some archness in this, and in the response.

"Oh, I expect so!"

"Well, we all have our weaknesses." But this was said so as to convey the impression that no weakness of anyone in that room could equal the weakness of Miss Perrin.

Claudia's curiosity was faintly aroused, but she knew better than to admit it.

Monday morning she remembered, and looked at Miss Perrin's place at breakfast. There was one parcel.

The rather old ladies and Mrs. Sully and the two foreign gentlemen whom Claudia never saw except at breakfast all came down, and Miss Perrin received their congratulations and opened her parcel. A new Prayer Book. Miss Perrin went to church a good deal.

"Just what I wanted!" said Miss Perrin.

"Nella?" asked someone as if she knew the answer.

"Nella always knows just what her friend wants," said someone else.

"Of course she knows!" said Miss Perrin rather fiercely. She was smoothing her book as though she were petting it.

That was all that happened on Miss Perrin's birthday. Claudia wondered why it should strike anyone as a weakness to have so dull a festival. But then, Miss Perrin herself was dull. She was nothing to look at one way or another; thin, colourless, quiet, with a sort of reserve or stiffness about her. She never showed emotion or enthusiasm about anything, not even about religion, or about music, though she played very well and it was soothing to sit and listen to her if you didn't want to think about anything. She never made a wrong note —that was a sort of weakness Claudia would have no difficulty in understanding. Claudia said to herself, "She is a strong, silent woman, as lovable as a lamp-post." settled it.

Then Miss Perrin got influenza. She got it rather badly and was shut up in her room to wrestle with it alone. The others were quite kind and sent up messages that they wished they could come and sit with her for a bit, but they were each and all so susceptible—though not nervous at all—one's health, though—and so they hoped, later on, perhaps——?

One evening when Claudia was making polite inquiries as to Miss Perrin's progress, she added in the same perfunctory manner, "Hasn't her Nella friend been to see her?" and was astonished to find her very ordinary remark received with a queer little breeze of embarrassment. It was a quite perceptible second or two before Mrs. Sully answered in a tone of melting honey:

"No, dear, she hasn't," and two of the others shook their heads with faint smiles.

Claudia did her best to shrug her shoulders so as to convey that she had no interest in old women's gossip. But she knew how to be aggravating, so began on it again when she went up to say good night.

"Don't you think Miss Perrin's Nella ought to be written to?" she asked.

"My dear—" said somebody, and

paused.
"There's no such person," finished some-

"I mean the friend who gave her the Prayer Book."

"How could she give her a Prayer Book if she doesn't exist?"

"But I saw the Prayer Book!"

"You didn't see Nella."

"Nobody has," came from the farthest arm-chair.

Claudia made another clutch at the Prayer Book.

"It came by post!" she stuttered.

"She sent it to herself," said Mrs. Chappell in a deep bass voice. "We all know that. Every year, Birthday and Christmas, she sends herself a present. From Nella. No such person."

"Not really," said Miss Grey-Watson rather sentimentally. "Miss P. invented her, you know—just made her up. Quite amusing, you know. You can almost get

to believe in her yourself."

"Well, I can't," said Mrs. Fox. "But still, there's no harm, I suppose. Though it's a sort of a tarradiddle."

"But," said Claudia, "how do you know—"

"Oh, we've always known!"

"Does she know?"

"Know that we know? I shouldn't think so. She might guess—— But we never let on, and she doesn't. It wouldn't be kind, you know. We all have our weaknesses."

But Miss Perrin! The strong, silent woman! Oh, rubbish! . . . To Claudia sitting up in bed in the dark she became for the first time a Person, a narrow-faced, greyhaired old thing, with a Weakness. Something to do with being alone. . . . Claudia was drowned in pity. How hard, with so many people in the world, that any one of them should be alone! She fell to picturing "Nella's" inception and growth. must have begun when Miss Perrin herself was young—a long time ago. She was much too old to invent now. Was "Nella" old now, too? How did she look to her inventor? Did she have little friendly failings, like eyeglasses, for instance, or rather thick ankles? Or would she be perfect all over and always quite young-about nineteen, say? Then, about Birthdays. Would "Nella" have one too? But then she was never really born. Wouldn't there ever, ever be a "Nella," not if she were wanted desperately and had thoughts sent out to her, and she were waited for without the least flicker of doubt for years and years and years? As Miss Perrin was waiting now! All alone, and rather ill, and, of course, knowing really that "Nella" would never come. Claudia could hardly bear it. She thought of creeping downstairs in the darkness and calling to Miss Perrin in a whisper, "I'm Nella! How are you?"... Horrible! Of course she would do nothing of the kind. That would be mocking at "Nella," and Miss Perrin, and everyone else who was lonely. Of course she wasn't "Nella." "Nella" was-her evening exercises came pushing up their maddening symbols into Claudia's night-bemused brain—" Nella" was zero. No. She wasn't! She wasn't! Zero was a monster that ate up everything else and remained nothing for ever. "Nella" was . . . Yes'. Claudia snugged down under the bedclothes with the new idea in her head. "Nella" was the unknown quantity—X.

... She jumped up again suddenly. There was something she had thought of she might do. She slipped out of bed, lit her candle (Mrs. Sully was economical of her lights) and got down on her knees before the small black trunk that contained her chief earthly possessions. Cunningly concealed between her new knitted jumper and a spare nightdress lay her Savings Bank book. No need for higher mathematics to read its tale. Its balance was small and plain. But it would do

it would do.

She crept back to bed and slept.

Next morning she was up early, had her breakfast, and was ready to start a full fifteen minutes before her usual time, because the Post Office people might very well be busy, and she would have to wait her turn.

Mrs. Sully came into the hall while her hand was on the door-latch and remarked, with her usual boarding-house cheerfulness, that Claudia was off early to-day.

Claudia ostentatiously consulted her wristwatch, retorted, "The hall clock is slow," and went out before an argument could be started.

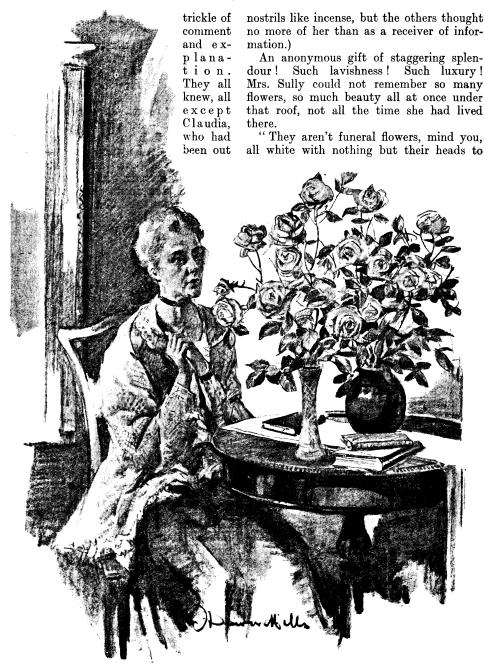
She properly apologised to the hall clock at dinner that evening.

"I think my watch must have been fast," she said.

"Ah," said Mrs. Sully, "I thought so. There's never much wrong with the hall clock. A minute, perhaps, now and then, one way or another." She added, to show how entirely she accepted Claudia's amends, "You must go up after dinner and see Miss Perrin's flowers."

"Flowers?" murmured Claudia.

Flowers. The table broke into a little



"Miss Perrin, thinner than ever, very upright and stiff in an uninviting chair, worshipping her flowers as if she were awestruck."

all day, and they seized the pretext of beginning again a discussion that had been going on all the afternoon. Miss Perrin's flowers—a boxful of them—such blossoms—so many of them—so perfect—every one a flawless bloom. And the perfume! (Yes. The perfume. It was going up into Claudia's

show. They're all sorts—oh! I can't tell you—and some with stems as long as my arm."

Claudia half whispered the name "Nella," and immediately the room was pervaded with her. But she was an unknown quantity. They all remembered that.



"Claudia crept up with one of them because she couldn't keep away, but she stayed near the door in the shadow where she could watch."

long! Why, we were as surprised as she was. You should have seen her! She the shop I mean?" went a greeny white for the minute—till "Did I not! Y

"Did you see where they came from—the shop I mean?"

"Did I not! You'd have to go to

a good shop to get a bunch like that."
"I wonder if any message or card was sent with them. They might have for-

gotten---''

"Oh, no!... To tell the truth, I rang them up after tea." Murmurs of interest round the table. "But they didn't know anything. Nothing left but the address it was to be sent to."

"You didn't ask whether it was a man or

woman gave the order?"

"I did. They couldn't say for certain. I suppose a shop like that would think nothing of it. Must be used to big orders. But they thought it was a woman."

A woman. How they would have liked to know whether she were old or young. Or whether she wore eyeglasses. Or had thick ankles.

But there was no such person as Nella. That was something to hang on to. You couldn't invent a person who would send you a roomful of flowers when you were ill.

"She doesn't know." That was the very old lady, Mrs. Smeeth, who always spoke slowly in a high quavering voice. "She doesn't know who sent them, and I hope she never will. Because by and by she will feel able to tell herself that Nella did, and that will be such a consolation to her when she is old, like me."

They went up, one after the other, all the evening, to "see how Miss Perrin was getting on." It made a great difference, Miss Perrin being so favoured by the Unseen Powers. It was much more intriguing than if it had been really Nella. Who did not, of course, exist.

Claudia crept up with one of them because she couldn't keep away, but she stayed near the door in the shadow where she could watch Miss Perrin, thinner than ever, very upright and stiff in an uninviting chair, worshipping her flowers as if she were awestruck. She had two bright patches under her eyes—perhaps there was a little feverishness returning—and she did not talk much, because when she ceased to keep her teeth firmly together her thin lips twitched—but then, she had been ill.

She said, "I don't want to get into bed. I shall be afraid to shut my eyes, for fear that when I open them They will be gone."

Claudia's feet were on linoleum, and her hand was clutching the knob of the chest of drawers, but her head was up in high heaven among the gods.

"How lovely I feel!" she rhapsodised within herself. "How perfectly, unutterably

 $\mathbf{exalted}$!"

Miss Perrin was wishing Miss Grey-Watson good night.

"I shall keep the label under my pillow,"

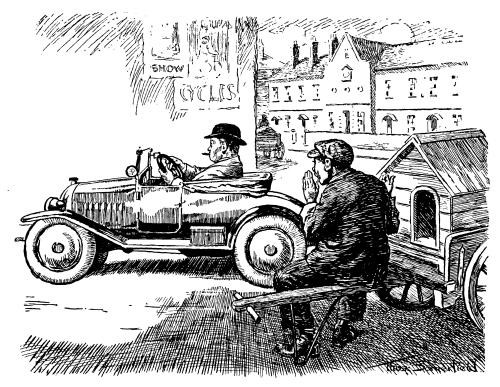
she said.

"O God," prayed Claudia, "don't let me ever let it out—not if I catch the flu and get delirious, not if I fall into a boiling rage, not if I get cocky or sentimental."... She opened her Algebra downstairs and smeared her middle finger with ink in the usual preliminaries to her evening's study. No good at all, of course. This was the sort of thing she covered her paper with:

"Nella = Zero. No, she doesn't. Nella is X. Not quite. Not to-night, at any rate. Nella and I are the same thing: therefore—we are not! Nella equals X—but where do the flowers come in? Oh well, Nella + Me—18s. = X. It doesn't sound quite right, but it will do for to-night?"

She tore up her exercises and went upstairs soberly to bed. But before she undressed she unlocked again the shabby black trunk and replaced in its hiding-place between the new jumper and the spare nightdress, her bank-book. Not because of its value, but because she did not wish anyone to learn by chance that it had none. The balance due was twopence.





A HAPPY THOUGHT.

HUMORIST (to proud owner of new two-seater): Want to buy a garage, guv'nor?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

JOURNEY'S END. By A. M. Burrage.

WE were on a local line, and the train from the junction was enjoying a quiet country ramble through a pleasant land of streams and pastures. It lingered lovingly alongside every platform, and departed at last unwillingly with groanings of springs and clinkings of coupling chains.

evening paper, and the man sitting opposite me was apparently in like case. He was the only other occupant of the compartment, a big tanned fellow in rough expensive-looking tweeds and one of the kind of wide-brimmed slouch hats which one associates with pastoral pursuits in distant lands. When suddenly I looked up and met his gaze, it seemed only civil to speak.

"Bit slow," I ventured.

"Always has been," he said. "I'm glad in a way. Don't want to see too many changes. Not that I shan't be glad to get home, for I've been long enough about it. I bet I've come farther than you."

"How far?" I asked.

"Queensland," he said. There was no bet.

I had long since digested the contents of my

"I haven't been home," he continued, "these thirty years. Thirty years last July. The old people are gone, of course, but there's my two brothers. I bet they'll be surprised to see me again."

"Don't they expect you?" I queried. He shook his head.

"I'm just going to take 'em by surprise. And a pleasant surprise it ought to be for 'em, too. I've got my own farm down under, and I've saved enough to give 'em a brother for an easy landlord if the old place is for sale. Bachelor men they both are, but I don't reckon they picked up much moss through staying at home. Farming in England ain't worth a hoot. Still, I'll see they're short of nothing for the rest of their days.

He beamed at me, and I found myself responding to the man's warmth and geniality. There was something pleasantly romantic in the thought of this wealthy returned exile springing a surprise on his two jog-along stay-at-home brothers.

"I wonder if they'll know you," I hazarded. "Not they. Not until I say who I am. And the joke is I shan't know them either. Not so much as a photograph have I seen of them this thirty years. They were boys of eighteen and twenty-one when I left home."

He broke off to chuckle reminiscently, and then resumed:

"I wonder if they're still fond of fishing. Fair mad on it they used to be. There's a good stream goes through the farm lands, and they were always quarrelling about whether maggots I left," said the man from Queensland. "I can see 'em now. It's hard to think they'll be so changed I shan't know 'em."

The train stopped at the station of a small town. Evidently it was market day, for the strip of road visible from the compartment windows was througed with cattle and drovers. Two middle-aged men of a pronounced agri-

cultural type got in and took seats at the opposite end. The man from Queensland glanced at them incuriously, and then looked out of the window beside him.

When the train was in motion our two fellow-travellers began to speak.

"Goin' down to see Sam about them heifers to-night?" one of them

"No, that can bide. I reckon I'll go out and have another try for that big 'un. I'm nearly sure it was him I missed yesterday evenin' under the willows. Such a bite it was. Drew the float down like that! And I

"Usin' paste, wasn't you?"

"Oh, well, we've both got our own opinions, and don't gain nothing by goin' over old ground. But you must allow this about maggotsthey don't wash off the hook or

come off loose in the fish's

Then it was that the man from Queensland jumped up with a cry and flung himself

across the compartment to shake a great hand in the faces of the two astonished farmers. Prior to their conversation they had been strangers to him: they were not so now.

"Hullo, Ed!" he cried. "Hullo, Dick! Don't you know me?

I'm Bill!"



Two men, dining in an old-fashioned hotel in the city, became involved in a dispute as

to whether a pineapple was a fruit or a vegetable. A bet was made, and the two agreed to accept the decision of the waiter, who was called to the table.

"John," said one, "how do you describe a pineapple? Is it a fruit or a vegetable?"

The waiter rubbed his hands, and with a benign smile replied, "It's neither, gentlemen; a pineapple is an extra."



DELAYED IN TRANSIT.

or paste was the best bait for roach. Ed was for maggots, I remember, and Dick for paste. I wonder if they've agreed about it yet, and which has given way to t'other."

I laughed sympathetically.

"They ought to have reached some decision in thirty years," I said. "If not, you'll have to act as arbitrator."

"They was arguing about it on the very day

[&]quot;Now then, Billy Green, you tell yer mother I want my saucepan back." What—ain't you 'ad it? I tied it on to your dog's tail a week ago."

personal affairs.

Unless, that is,

PERSONAL AFFAIRS. By H, J. Slater.

"ER—excuse me—may I speak to you?" said the prosperous-looking man in the opposite corner-seat.

"That depends!" said I. "What do you want to talk about—astro-physics, or hotel charges in Bessarabia, or——?"

"No, no! Nothing so dreadful! I want to talk about myself and my affairs. I want to tell you that my little son is such a knowing one—only the other day when the roly-poly pudding skidded and rolled off the kitchen table, he said . . . "

"Hold hard," I cried. "What your wonderful little son does and says leaves me cold. Now, if you like, I'll talk to you about my fretwork. I made a lovely tea-cosy last week—all the neighbours went simply crazy over it—all my own work—and my own invention too—being a fretwork cosy, it lets the air get to the teapot..."

The man opposite stopped me. "Your hobbies don't interest me," he said frigidly; 'let's both declare our innings."

Silence fell once more.

It was broken by the olive-complexioned little

man in the third corner of the compartment.

"Nice day, gentlemen, isn't I bet my nephew's enjoying himself to-day. You should see him drive off a bunker. Even old Jebberline, who hates him like poison, admits that the way he guides the four-inhand is nothing short of marvellous. When he \dots "

"We are not interested . . ." began the man opposite and myself, as if we were one person.

Silence fell.

This time it was the big smiling man in the remaining corner - seat who broke the silence. "You see, now, gentlemen," he said, "that there is a good

reason, after all, for the oft-sneered-at icy reserve between fellow-passengers on short train journeys. You have each simply got to be standoffish and all the rest of it—pure self-defence—to prevent each of the others talking

of *his* affairs, his little petty, potty personal affairs." His lip curled in disdain.

"Then what's the remedy?" I asked.

"Why, obviously, while resolutely breaking down this icy reserve, not to talk to strangers about your own



Gardener (to house-painter): You idle 'ound! I've been standin' 'ere for the last quarter of an hour and I ain't seen you do a stroke!

twenty yards' non-stop breast-stroke swimming championship, and her teacher thinks that if only she practises hard she ought to become the leading cymbal player in England bar none. And as for her languages, why, she can recite 'The Anchor's Weighed' in Triple Dutch backward . . . "

"Yes, I think it will rain," I interrupted, deliberately opening my newspaper.

Silence fell.

"We all go about the matter the wrong way," suddenly said the tall thin man in the middle seat; "we are not interested in each other's personal affairs. Very well, let us cut them out. I never talk about my children—I haven't any."

The other four of us desisted from fixedly regarding the country-side through the carriage

windows, and looked at him.

"You don't want to know," he continued blithely, "what my landlady said this morning when I sharpened my razor on a rasher of bacon, do you?" We all shook our heads. course, you don't! As a matter of fact, she said that it was obvious that I hadn't been used to first-class boarding-houses, otherwise I would have known that the bacon was hard because that was the latest fashion of cooking it in all the big hotels. That's what she said, but, of course, you don't want to be bothered by hearing it, do you?" We all shook our heads again. "No! Of course not! That's why I didn't tell it to you, nor mention that she tells fibs something awful and swore that I used three, not two, pieces of coal last Monday. . . .

"Then, again, what interest is it to you to learn that when I was last in Paris-I travel a good deal, bless you, yes !--you mightn't think it, but I do !-all over the world, like a native !-I asked a Frenchman the time, and he didn't seem to know his own language. You're not interested in my affairs, naturally !—why should you be? Still, it was funny about that Frenchman. I asked him the time- 'Quelle her est vous, si vous merci,' I said—and he just looked at me blank-like. But you don't want to hear all that—and it wouldn't interest you if I were to mention that those French people I met were all the same—bless my soul, they were really all had blank expressions when I spoke to them —I suppose they no longer teach French in the French Schools. . . .

"Well, as I was saying first go off, it would have been a mistake to have told you-perfect strangers to me and each other-all that." (We nodded our heads in unison.) "Otherwise, I might have mentioned that last Friday, in the club, in the billiard tournament, I scored a break of 10 not out. . . . But you're probably not interested in billiards." (Our heads moved again in chorus.) "I thought not! So, I won't tell you that I'm hot stuff at snooker cannons—it might bore you. Last year I headed our list-225 snooker cannons and one unfinished. Of course, if I thought it would interest you-which I know it wouldn't-I'd remark that it's utter foolishness to attempt to plant tomatoes before May's set in. Now, last year . . ."

We opened one of the carriage doors and quietly disposed of him. At the next station,

another passenger got in. After he had composed himself, he looked all round and then said: "Er—excuse me, gentlemen, lovely weather—er—don't you think it's a mistake for fellow-passengers to be reserved?—it's a short life, after all. May I"

But we seized him, and, although he struggled valiantly, we plugged two handkerchiefs in his

mouth and bound them in tightly.



A NEW MORAL.

It is now stated that the real reason why a bird sings is as a warning to rivals who may poach upon the food supplies near his nest.

Full often, as I've heard the way
The birdle sings the livelong day,
His pæan wafted to the skies
Has tempted me to moralise.
Do not (I've begged myself) forget
The good example that is set
By one who tells the ambient air
That life should be devoid of care.

Although the linnet, while he sings, Does not neglect essential things, Nor fail to fix his wonted firm Half-nelson on the early worm, He does not mar his mental ease With nebulous contingencies; In short, his happy careless state Is something you should imitate.

But now it seems that I was wrong To draw this moral from a song Which those, and only those, provide Who're sordidly preoccupled—
A "Wacht am Rhein" intended for A hint that he's prepared for war; It tells of his resolve to thump Intruders on his ration dump.

But though this news impairs, of course,
His value as a moral force,
A pattern still he well might be
(Though not to one as nice as me).
Those warlike souls who breathe their threats
For my unliquidated debts
Might make the birdie's way their own
And bluster in his ducet tone.
T. Hodgkinson.



The stranger rushed up to the corner, where a group of villagers were discussing things. He waited for no introductions or invitations to speak, but burst forth with, "What's all the excitement about?" The group of villagers eyed him in silence for a moment. Finally one native removed his pipe from his mouth, spat to leeward and replied, "Bout a month ago."

"LISTEN!" he said. "I've spent three weeks teaching a girl to ride a bicycle. Three weeks? Talk about patience—Job was a novice at the game. And what is my reward? I've just been to the theatre, and——"

"Seen the girl with another fellow?"

"No! A thousand times worse! I saw her on the stage. She's a trick cyclist."

WHERE MEN GO MAD. By Eric D. Brand.

Last week I ventured into a London store. Not voluntarily, of course. Lucilla had rung up to ask me to meet her in the Wine Room, next the Oak Room, at Haggard's at three o'clock, without fail. Now when one's spouse adds "without fail" one would indeed be a brave man to disappoint her.

In keeping appointments with Lucilla I have to calculate the time of her appearance from past averages. Just lately it has been sixteen

point five minutes after the time appointed, so it was 3.12 when I arrived at Haggard's main entrance.

I sneaked past the gorgeous sentinel who guarded portals and found myself in a vast hall, where a crowd of elegantly dressed people wandered hither and thither, ignoring completely the attentions of vari-M.C.'s, 0118 whatever they are called, who were soliciting information.

One of these, a most immaculate and awe-inspiring personage, accosted me, and I, poor fool, had not the courage to withstand him. From his great heighthe seemed at least eight feet two-he bent his gaze upon me, and I felt acutely conscious of the shabbiness of my hat and the two creases down each trouser leg.

In a deep bass-baritone he asked what the deuce I wanted in there, though he put it more delicately.

"Please," I mumbled, "I want the Wine Room, next the Oak Room."

His eyes scanned my countenance and dwelt at last upon my nose.

"You mean, I think, the Wine Department," he said, and extending a regal arm, added, "Keep straight on through the Lace Curtains and Mattresses, bear left through the Drugs and Chemicals, turn right at the Provisions, keep on past the Cooked Meats, turn sharp

left and you are in the Wine Department."

With that he dismissed me and I crept away, vainly trying to remember his directions. To cut a long story short, after twice finding myself in the street, being sucked into a lift with a crowd of vociferous females and footing my way back from the sixth floor, feeling bruised and battered from constant collisions with Amazons of all shapes and sizes, but principally sizes, I at last bribed a boy in buttons to elbow a passage to the Wine Department.

At 3.31 I sat down, hot and thirsty, to recup-



"LOOKING BEFORE AND AFTER."

"Please, Mother wants a bottle of indigestion mixture. We had crumpets to-day—and we're going to have some more to-morrow."

erate in that jolly little place surrounded by blue labels and black labels, red seals and white seals, and hundreds and hundreds of bottles but unfortunately there was no saloon bar, so I felt rather like Tantalus.

Of course Lucilla wasn't there. It was possible, but most unlikely, that she had "bin and gorn," though the assistant whom I questioned said he had only seen nine women in cinnamon costumes in the last half-hour, and not one of them was as beautiful as I pictured.

He was jolly friendly, that assistant. Probably a married man, although his hair was

not white. Anyhow, he was very understanding and we soon got chatting about the war and communism and wines and things, until about 3.43 I ordered half a dozen St. Bilious, because one really can't spend an afternoon in a Wine Department without buying something. Moreover, the assistant made me feel that my shabby hat and unsightly trousers were merely the eccentricities of wealth, and he took it for granted that I knew the best vintages of port. In fact, I bought a bottle.

But now I was beginning to get worried, for if Lucilla kept me much longer I should have difficulty in settling for the various wines I should have ordered. It struck me, indeed, that it might be cheaper to wait in the Cooked Meats Department and keep hopping in and

an appointment in the Tobacco Department." "There'll be no next time," said Lucilla savagely.

At which I cheered up—for such an assurance was surely cheap at thirty shillings.



THE REALLY HEALTHY HOLIDAY.

A writer in the daily Press asserts that wet holidays are much healthier and more invigorating to the system than

> When on my holidays I gaze From out the window-pane And view things through a blurry haze Of never-ceasing rain My feelings have been hitherto, To put it mildly, somewhat blue.



NO IMPLICATION.

CHARWOMAN (washing bust of her employer): I thought it was time you 'ad a wash again, sir!

out of the Wines to see if Lucilla had arrived.

I was just going to carry out this plan when suddenly she drifted in, looking relieved, if somewhat annoyed, when she saw me.

"Cheero," I said, getting up and looking at the clock, "you're a little late, dear, aren't you?"

Lucilla snorted—she denies it now, but I'm

quite positive about it.

"Late!" she repeated. "Why, you ghastly person, for three-quarters of an hour I was waiting in the Pine Room, next the Oak Room, until it struck me you might have misunderstood, as you so frequently do, since when I've been searching the store. Late indeed!"

"Well," I said huffily, "I wish you'd take elocution lessons. It's cost me thirty shillings waiting here. I thought you said the Wine Room. Perhaps next time you might make

But now of course I'll hail with joy The slightest sign of wet, My mackintosh and gamp employ Without the least regret; I'll revel in the rain and shun That dangerous basking in the sun.

Resorts in future I'll select With rainfall very high, Where it is hopeless to expect A day that's really dry; For that appears the needful step Towards acquiring vim and pep.

R. H. Roberts.



"THE noise a baby makes has the greatest carrying power of any articulated sound," says an article. But when the noise occurs in the middle of the night, father does the carrying.





MELANYL MARKING INK Absolutely Indelible. NoHeating Required.

A Good Selection shown by THE ARMY AND NAVY STORES, WHITELEY'S, SELFRIDGE'S, JOHN BARKER'S, MAPLE'S, Etc. Wholesale Manufacturers: SIMMONS & CO., LONDON, S.E.





Have you acquired a stooping position which causes narrow shoulders, contracts the chest and prevents deep natural breathing. Whether Man, Woman or Child, this defect

can be easily corrected by wearing the patent

Imperial Shoulder Brace which gives the support necessary to make you upright, develops deep breathing, relieves chest complaints and improves your health, figure and appear-

your health, ngere and appearance. Light, comfortable and unobservable in wear. Recommended by hundreds of gratified users: over 25,000 so'd. SEND TO-DAY, giving waist and height measurement, with P.O. 10s. 6d. Carriage abroad 1s. 6d. extra. Free booklet on request. W. AVIS-JOHNSON & Co., 5 Robert St., Adelphi, Strand, London, W.C.2. Please mention Windsor Magazine.





THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

THE successful business man had found a strip of paper on his lawn-tennis court, whilst he was attempting to reduce his rather obvious propensity to a full figure.

On this piece of paper was inscribed an accurate and detailed plan of his private office. The exact position of the staircase was noted, plus the number of stairs. A few pencilled remarks indicated which doors swung in and which swung out. Even the windows were mentioned.

"STEP right up, ladies and gentlemen," shouted the showman at the fair, "and see the man get sawn in two before your very eyes. Only a penny."

"I'll risk that much," said a bystander, "though, of course, it must be a trick, otherwise they'd charge more."



"Well, was my speech to your liking, Pat?"



ONLY THE BEST WANTED.

OLD DEAR: I want a belt for my young nephew's cricketing trousers. What sort does Hobbs wear?

Of course the owner of the office was alarmed. So much so, in fact, that he rushed from his roller into the dining-room, to break the news to his family.

"Some burglar must be going to raid my office," he gasped, extending the strip of paper.

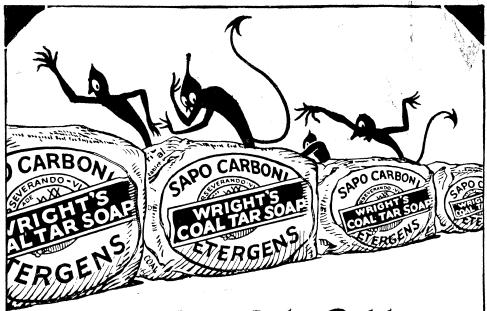
"No, it isn't that," cried his youngest daughter, glancing at the sketch. "Those notes are in Jack's handwriting. He's coming down to your office to ask you to let him marry me."

asked the speaker at the finish of an oration. "Sure, it was a grand speech!" declared Pat.

"Was there any part of it more than another that seemed to hold you?" the speaker asked.

"Well, now that you ask me, Î'll tell you," responded the Irishman. "What took hold of me most, sir, was your perseverance—the way ye went over the same thing again and again."





The Wall against infection

Wright's Coal Tar Soap is something more than a good soap. It is a protective agent against such infections as can be carried on the skin and is a powerful factor in keeping away illness, for it kills harmful germs immediately. It is a perfect combination of an antiseptic with a soothing, cleansing soap.

ALWAYS USE IT AND KEEP WELL.

WRIGHTS COAL TAR SOAP

6d. per tablet. —and

ablet. Box of 3 tablets, 1/6.
—and it's BRITISH.

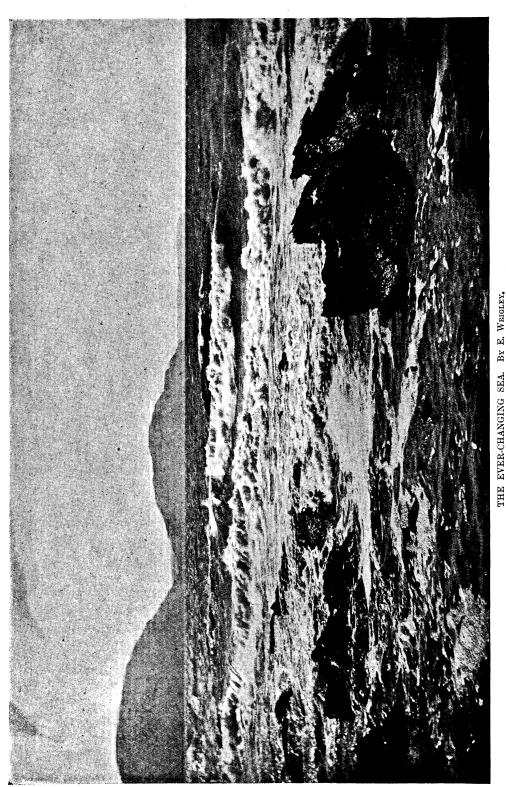






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"He had to beg her to go that he might not keep the others waiting. 'You haven't quite made up your mind about me?' she said at the door. 'I can see you haven't.'"

A THING IN ITSELF

By E. TEMPLE THURSTON

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

T was not one of those more or less common cases where a man goes gradually blind. In these the burden of tragedy is fairly laid, weight by weight, upon the shoulders that must bear it. In the end, so long has been the contemplation, that the last stroke falls with the lightness of the last drop of rain in a thunder shower that has beaten down every flower in the garden. It falls, almost with the promise of peace, on a mind that has watched and waited over long for the inevitable darkness.

It was not like this with Michael Brydone. The darkness fell upon him as a wild beast falls upon its prey. It leapt upon his shoulders and bore him to the ground. It tore his spirit with the sharp fangs of despair and left him with hope and

courage like blood streaming his life away.

He was taking a holiday from his work. He was staying in a little inn in the Sussex Downs. His evenings were spent in the tap-room of the White Horse, his days in long wanderings over the grassy Downs through lanes of gorse and stunted juniper and twisted yew.

He came there every year, a recluse, leaving his pen behind him and taking an oath with himself to do no work until his return to London. After a few days, he would find himself walking into Chichester to buy a pencil and a block of note-paper, just for jottings of the odd thoughts that came through his mind with the long silences and wide spaces in those peaceful uplands.

It always ended with work. The odd

thoughts became poems. Michael Brydone's one book of verse was compiled out of the collection of thoughts jotted down during those holidays in the Sussex Downs. Five fortnights representing five years went to the making of Juniper and Yew. London, he was one of those writers of prose, like Barbellion, who had not found a form to please a public and needed the advertisement of death to make him known. Under conditions of extreme poverty, he wrote for the superior periodicals that are as poor as the contributor. Once every eighteen months or so, he published a book which by courtesy of the reviewers who admired his work was called a novel, but never found its way into the heart of that public who will pay cash down for anything that makes them forget that life is a real affair.

It was the year after Juniper and Yew had been published. Michael Brydone was thirty-six. He was taking his yearly holiday at the White Horse Inn. He had bought his block of note-paper in Chichester and was sitting on the short grass of the Downs looking over Kingly Vale to the spire of Chichester cathedral piercing out of the haze of heat that lay like a woman's veil over the face of the lowland stretching to Selsey and the sea.

His memory of it afterwards, when memory did not cut too deep a wound, was that it was as though Time was sleeping in that heat. It was impossible to think that anything was happening anywhere in the world. Impossible to believe that people were being born or were dying; that there was the noise of life anywhere. It was like the minutes' silence of Armistice Day only prolonged and prolonged until it seemed as though life could never be articulate again. There was no cloud in the sky. There was no wind. Corn in the fields down in the valley was standing motionless to its ripening. He remembered a kestrel hawk hovering over a bed of wild sage, but its wings were beating so quickly that they eluded the sense of motion.

Then, from nowhere more definite than over the crest of the hill where he was sitting, there came a sound, a running sound, a sound so definite and yet so abstract that afterwards, when he described it to Leah, he called it a sound of speed.

It was a rush of wind, set loose like a lost thing in the silence and the stillness of that day. He felt it stirring in his hair as it passed him. It bent the plants of sage about him as it went by. It whispered in the juniper trees. It swung the long crooked branches of the gorse. And then it was gone. He just saw it racing across a field of rye down in the valley and then the sun dimmed in the heavens. The world faded from gold to grey. In another moment it was black and dark as a shuttered room at midnight.

He was blind.

It was as though there had been a spirit in that wind, as though it were itself a spirit and it had stolen his sight as it rushed by. With a cry he turned his face up to the warmth of the sun. There was no light. Only a faint sensation of its direction from the sun's rays upon his eyeballs. He had passed from a luminous world into one of utter darkness.

The most poignant consciousness in his mind was not that he could not see, it was that he was alone.

A shepherd found him crawling down the hill-side on his hands and knees and brought him to the White Horse Inn. He remained there for another week, sitting for most of the day on the wooden form where the travelling visitor drinks his pint before he passes on down the white road and after the slope of the hill is seen no more. There he would sit with his face turned up towards the sun. It shone all that week. Not for a long time had they seen such fine weather. He felt it burning on his cheeks. He felt it beating against his eyes and being thrown back again unreflected, like raindrops splashing against a window-pane they cannot saturate.

At the end of the week he had found not courage but a silence in which to hide his despair. He made arrangements, expensive for the length of his purse, to be taken back to London. His blindness there where the sight of the world had been everything from those hill-tops seemed more acute, he thought, than if he were in London in his own rooms in Red Lion Square. There were things there that would be sensitive to his touch and he was eager, apprehensively eager, to try the sensitiveness of his fingers, to have a new vision with them that must take the place of sight. There was the noise of London too. The only noise in that place was the laughter of the men in the tap-room. Sometimes their songs on a Saturday night. It was too easily distinguishable in the silence. London, even the difference between the rumble of a motor-bus and the hoot of a taxi would have its variety, its wider touch with In London one never thought of the sky, one seldom asked for sunshine. He must get back to London. He went.

He had to learn a new way of life. It was to take him some months. Fortunately there was enough money to his credit in the bank to enable him to keep going during that period when work was impossible.

He had not thought work would be impossible. He had believed that by touching the edges of the paper underneath his hand, he would still be able to write.

One day, a month after his return, he sent out for some very thick paper. There was the subject for an essay in his mind. He felt the keenness to be doing it which sounds so wonderful to some people when it is called inspiration.

He wrote all that day. Page after page he wrote, laying it carefully on one side in order as it was written. Towards evening he had finished. He groped his way across the room to the telephone, lifted off the receiver and asked for the number of his publishers' office.

There was a little clerk there in the sales department who read his books. He bought them and had once summoned enough courage to ask Brydone to autograph one of them. They had both been intensely shy about it, the clerk because he felt he was an underling talking to one of their authors, Michael Brydone, because any of these public recognitions of his work made him feel that he was being questioned about his private life. He asked for the little clerk on the telephone.

"Would it be too much trouble," he inquired, "for you to come round to my rooms in Red Lion Square? I want you to do a favour for me."

The little clerk had been given a ticket for the theatre that night, but there was not the faintest hesitation in his voice when he said that he would come. He gave his ticket to one of the other clerks, and having gone home, washed himself and put on a clean collar, he set out for Red Lion Square. It was only when he was knocking on the door and heard the body of Michael Brydone groping its way across the room to open it that he remembered the needlessness of all his preparations. Where was the virtue of a clean collar to a blind man?

And what was the favour he could do? Seeing Michael Brydone for the first time since his blindness, he felt what a little thing the sacrifice of his ticket for the theatre had been. It was pathetic to see the man still groping about a room he must know so

well. There was no help to be given him in this. The sales clerk noticed as he watched him that he was learning a new way of life with every step and every touch of his fingers.

"I'm hoping in about a month's time I shall be able to go out," said Brydone. "I'm getting a sort of expert at feeling my way about. Crossings'll be a bit difficult of course—but I've always noticed that people are jolly decent about that kind of thing. I shall start at night when there isn't much traffic about."

To start at night. That gave the sales clerk an insight into what it was to be blind. The darkness made no matter. Day and night, they were all one. It was safer at night.

"What is it you want me to do?" he asked. "I may say that anything I can do in any way, I shall be most honoured."

Brydone tried not to hear that word honoured. What honour could there be doing anything for a blind man? It was like the sales clerk to use it. It was the hero-worshipping attitude of mind. He couldn't help it. The less said about honour the better. He went to the table where he had been writing all that day and gathered up the sheets of paper.

"I've been having a shot at the first bit of work I've done," he said, "since—since this happened. I thought it 'ud be difficult, but it's really quite easy. I got this thick paper so I could feel the width of the page. Expect it's like a school fist because I wrote very carefully so as to keep the lines straight. It's a bit of a handicap of course, thinking about the lines—rather like rubbing yourself with one hand and patting yourself with the other. But I suppose I shall get used to that."

He was standing blindly in the middle of the room with the sheets of paper in his hand. It was not quite definite what he wanted. He appeared sensitive about putting his request into words. Again the sales clerk asked him what he could do.

"If it isn't really too much of a bore," said Brydone, "would you mind reading this thing out to me. It's a bit of a job to know what one's done, and if you don't mind taking a pencil so that you can write in any alterations that may occur to me. I am awfully sorry to bother you like this—"

The sales clerk took the papers. Brydone felt along the edge of the table till he came to his chair, and sat down.

There still remains the expression of the

spirit in eyes that have no material sight. look of quick eagerness was in his. some weeks he had been living in an idleness blacker than the dark world about him. he sat on the edge of his chair waiting for the sales clerk to begin his reading, there was a light in his blind eyes as of a man who sees hope brighter than a sun-ray. His lips were slightly parted. There was a readiness in the alert pose of his head. He was leaning forward, like a runner poised on the tips of his fingers for the sound of the starter's pistol.

There was no pistol—no report. waited in silence. The silence gathered. He felt it pressing about him. It was beat-

ing against his ears.

"Go on," he said. "I'm ready." "I can't," the clerk stammered.

"Why not?"

"It's—it's all——"

The papers rustled as he passed one after another through his fingers. They were all the same. The first few words on the first page were the only ones that had kept to the straight line. The next line had tilted upwards, crossing the first as it reached the end. From then onwards, as he had warmed into his subject, the lines had become more disordered. They cancelled each other. The pages were a network of scrawling inkmarks, undecipherable, tragic in their bewildering confusion.

"It's all what?" asked Brydone.

"The lines are written over one another," said the sales clerk. "I—I can only make out a few words just here and there. terribly sorry. I can't read it. No one could read it," he added, as though the fault might have been his. "If anyone on earth could, I would, I promise you."

A clock ticked on the mantelpiece. Clocks have voices. This had a quick, chattering voice. It chattered out the seconds like some garrulous maker of small talk who feels the conversation must be kept going at all

costs.

Tick-tuck, tick-tuck, tick-tuck went the clock on the mantelpiece.

II.

It was arranged by Brydone's publishers that he should put an advertisement in The Times for an amanuensis. There was indication of a certain movement in the market, as they say, for his work. Juniper and Yew was finding a public. Their sympathy for his blindness was based on sound commercial principles. They felt that if a vogue for his work should materialise, it would be a terrible thing if a man of his talent—they were becoming disposed to call it genius should be utterly incapacitated.

"But I don't think I could ever dictate," he said. "I've never felt I could think of a

word till I had a pen in my hand."

They told him it was all a matter of habit. "Get someone sympathetic, who doesn't jar, and you'll soon get used to it."

They advised a woman for the job. "I'd sooner it was a man," said Brydone. "I don't get on with women. They-they make me self-conscious. What's the good of being self-conscious when you're trying to work. It 'ud kill every idea stone dead.'

They argued that only a woman would have the patience to help him through the difficulties he would have to overcome in getting used to the process of dictation.

"Start with a woman, anyhow," they said. "To begin with, you can get them cheaper. You'll be able to afford a man later if you

want a change."

Paragraphs in the papers about Brydone's sudden affliction and his struggle with adversity were having an effect upon his sales. Knowing his hatred for that kind of publicity, the sales clerk told him nothing of these. When, at the end of the half-year, he was sent a bigger cheque than he had ever received before, he felt the impetus and confidence for fresh work. He allowed them to insert their advertisement in the paper for a lady amanuensis and waited on the morning arranged for interviews as a man waits his appointment with a dentist.

It was not that he disliked women. of the deprivations of his blindness was that he could no longer see the beauty he had often watched in women's faces. never been a close scrutiny. A woman passing him in the street, another sitting near him in the theatre or in a restaurant. had found his eyes following them with a sense of joy that stimulated in his mind some formless consciousness of unattainable romance. Pictures of women did not have this effect. It was the living creature that held his glance—the light in the eye, the play of the lips responding to the spirit with-But to come in contact with them, to exchange thoughts in conversation, drove him to the extremes of self-consciousness. He felt himself like one fingering a delicate instrument whose hands were only used to the implements of manual labour.

When the first knock fell on his door, he

the others waiting.

had to beg her to go that he might not keep

called admittance sharply with the hope it would soon be over.

There were five of them all waiting downstairs, taking their order as they arranged it amongst themselves.

"You haven't quite made up your mind about me?" she said at the door. "I can see you haven't." "You have the advantage of me," said He sat looking at them with his sightless

eyes, feeling as they spoke that he knew what each one of them was like. That hard voice. He saw her. She needed a higher salary than he could afford. " Of course I should be very glad to help you," she said. Brydone assured her it was not help he needed. "Just a little quiet work," he said, and tried to $_{
m find}$ "'Go on,' he said. 'I'm ready.'
'I can't,' the clerk stammered.
'Why not?' 'It's—it's all——' 'It's all what?' asked Brydone. 'The lines are written over one another. I-I can only make out a few words just here and there.' his way to the door to open it for her. Then that gay creature who would do

her utmost, who loved literature and was considered such excellent company by

all her friends. It was not the salary she cared about. She merely wanted to be independent of her home. Did he know how boring home life was to a girl with any spirit those days? How old was she? That indefinable pause and then the spontaneous

admission that she was twenty-nine. He

Brydone, and was astounded to find he had been satirical with a woman. She left a quietness in the room behind her when she was gone.

Then a third and a fourth. He knew each one of them to be possessed of an essential ugliness. He stood at the mantelpiece fingering his pipe waiting for the last to come and go.

It was before she spoke, before he heard her enter the door which the last one before her had left open, that he knew she was there.

He had heard the others. This was feeling her to be there. He knew she was standing in the room looking at him.

"Please sit down," said Brydone. He had learnt a formula from the four interviews preceding hers. He was passing through it quickly when she said:

"I think all this seeing people has worried, must have worried you a good deal. Shall I come another time? I don't want to lose this post, if you should think me suitable for it, and I don't think you're really thinking whether I am or not."

"Why don't you want to lose it?"

"Because—I expect the others have said this too—because I've read your work—all of it, I think. And I've heard that since your blindness you have stopped working."

She did not hesitate over that word blindness. It came straight to her lips and left them without effort.

He felt less blind than at any moment since that day on the Sussex Downs as she said it. His hands touched familiar objects until he found his chair. Then he sat down.

"I didn't get your name," said Brydone.

"Holt—Leah Holt."

" Leah?"

" Yes."

Leah, the tender-eyed, whose beauty was not the arresting beauty of Rachel.

He saw her and more plainly than all the others. Leah, the tender-eyed. With the sightlessness of his own eyes he remained a few moments in silence, looking across those material darknesses to the light of beauty he knew was in her face.

"It'll be a tiresome job," he said.

" Why?"

"Living at the beck and call of a blind man. I shall try and work as regularly as I can, but one never knows. Ideas jump about. There's a room here you can have for yourself to work in. My publishers are kindly lending me a typewriter. But I shall sometimes be dragging you out just when you're typing. It'll be a miserable job."

"I've probably considered all its disadvantages more than you have. I have a

job I'm working in at present."

"And you think this'll be easier?"

"No-that's very easy. They're quite

good to me. The hours are very reasonable. The pay's good."

"Then why in the name of heaven—?"
"They are a firm of brokers in the city."

The delicate inflexion of her voice conveyed everything she could have told him in words of her struggle to keep her soul fine through all the distasteful occupations of her mind

"Well, it's not for me to advise you," said Brydone. "I don't know what you want to get out of life, financially or anyway. And in any case, I'm biased."

"How biased?"

"Because with those other four girls I talked to, I'd come to the conclusion that the kind of help I wanted didn't exist. They made me more blind than I've felt since I lost my sight."

"Perhaps I shall do that too."

"No—you don't. When you talked about my blindness just now, I felt almost as if I could see again. Not the old things—I'm getting a proportionate sense of them with my fingers. But new things. Naturally I'm biased. I can't advise you. I want you to accept the job."

"Then I do accept," said Leah.

"You haven't heard what the salary is."
"No—but I'm assuming it's enough to

"Two pounds a week. I don't know what you girls get paid. I only know what I can afford. How much less is it than what you

are getting in your broker's office?"

"It's the same."

With as much conviction must Leah have acted the lie to Jacob.

He could not see the old things. Had he been able he would have seen the flame in her cheeks. All he saw was the eagerness of her spirit to help him in his work. The Lord God of the hosts of Israel was with her. He put out his hand into the darkness and said:

"Well—let's shake hands on it—that's settled."

It was not like a shaking of hands. It was like a meeting across incredible distances where, from that moment of his first blindness, he had felt himself to be alone.

III.

LEAH HOLT had worked with Michael Brydone for the whole of that autumn, the following winter and the succeeding spring. In that time he had overcome the difficulties of dictation and written a new book. There

was a more human note in it than had been apparent in any of his other work. The publishers entertained high hopes, which was more in the way of entertaining than they had done since Michael Brydone's work had been known in the office.

On the morning in June when he received a cheque in advance of royalties, he turned to Leah. He had felt the perforated edge with his finger and was waving it about in the air like a flag.

"We're going to the Downs!" he said.
"We need a holiday and we're going for a

fortnight to the White Horse."

She said nothing about the unconventionality of it to him. It did not occur to her. Obviously he could not go alone. When she told her mother that evening, Mrs. Holt said:

"I don't know what you young women want parents for nowadays."

"Just to love us," said Leah.

She was going to bed and, putting her arm round her mother's neck, she kissed her as though Mrs. Holt were the child and she were giving her her blessing.

Leah had been for yearly excursions with her parents to the seaside—to Worthing, to Broadstairs. She had never been for a holiday into the country before. With the joy of her eyes she showed him the Downs he had thought he would never see again. Translated through her impressions to his memory they had a new and a deeper meaning.

It was to have been a complete holiday from work.

"Don't bring any notebooks or anything," he had said. "Lock up the typewriter. No more dictation for a fortnight."

"Still miss your pen?" she had said.

"No—no—not that. But I want to browse, chew the cud, lie down in the grass—like a cow."

By reason of an instinct women possess so infallibly because they know nothing about it, she had brought a notebook with her that fitted comfortably into a pocket. At the end of the first week it was half full.

They were sitting on the brow of the hill one morning above Kingly Vale. It was the first time he had taken her there. It had scarcely been necessary ever to hold his arm. He had guided her—past Black Bush, beyond the hidden race-course where the horses train in secret. When he felt the slope of the hill beneath his feet he sat down.

"Can you see the spire of the cathedral?" he asked.

She said she could.

"Then that's Kingly Vale—down below where all those yew trees are. Can you see a juniper tree anywhere blown into the shape of a hedgehog with all its bristles flat and its nose cocked up in the air?"

She looked about and found it.

"Right or left?"

" Left."

"Then just a little farther down from where we are, is where I was sitting when that wind came over the hill and took my sight along with it."

She was learning from him the faculty of looking towards things she could not see. It was as though she were exchanging with him the faculty of seeing things his eyes had no direction to look at. She was looking at him then, crawling upon his hands and knees as the shepherd had found him.

"I'd just written those verses—the foxglove ones that I gave you to read—do you remember?"

"I remember."

"It was to be one of a series of wild-flower verses."

"The foxgloves in the deep wood stand--"

She was saying it. He was too amazed that she knew it by heart to interrupt.

"The foxgloves in the deep wood stand Like guardsmen in Whitehall, They do not look to either hand And scarcely move at all.

"Only the wind that, passing, frets The raindrop on its stem Just stirs their silken epaulettes But does not bother them.

"Like guardsmen in Whitehall they gaze Before them through the air, And all the bees on summer days Like nursemaids come and stare,"

"When did you learn that?" he asked.

"Since you showed it me."

He laughed.

"Little thought those 'ud be my last verses," said he.

"Why should they be your last?"

"Well—I always wrote verse down here—in the holidays—times when I swore I wouldn't do a stroke of work. They all came out of notes, jottings, little things I shoved down as they occurred to me. I remember the note for that one."

"What was it?"

"Just—' bees staring at the foxgloves.' That was how that thing got itself written.

Well—I can't make those notes any more. Prose is different. Prose comes along with a swing. This verse—it's like jumping up at things that are out of reach. I can't see to jump. I can't dictate notes to you. It 'ud take all the jump out of 'em."

She took out her book from her pocket and asked him to listen. For ten minutes, with his eyes staring in front of him, he listened to things he had said to her since they had been in the Downs. He was pressing his lips together so that she might not see the tremor in them when she had finished. Then he turned round to the direction of her voice.

"Are you as beautiful as all that?" he

"What do you mean? What's beautiful in me about that?"

She saw his hand stretching out in the air towards her.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"I want to feel your face with my hand. Don't stop me."

She let him feel her face. His fingers passed over her hair and down the line of her forehead. They touched her eyes, the arch of her brows. They passed down the line of her nose and when they touched her lips her lips were trembling under his touch. He took her face in both his hands and with his sightless eyes looked at her so deeply that she felt_her whole soul standing before him.

"My lovely—" he said—"My lovely woman—I didn't know there was such loveliness in the world."

IV.

When Michael Brydone married Leah Holt he had a sense of vision clearer than sight. What he had lost in the blindness of his eyes, she gave back in the generosity of her spirit. She lent her eyes to him to see with. She never tired of the impulse to share with him the things she saw. With the eyes of his spirit she looked out at a world he had lost sight of, an Atlantis. It was as though she had brought her love to clear the waters—when, dimly submerged beneath those fathoms of darkness, he could see his lost world again, glimmering, contorted, but beautiful and a world once more.

He knew this, but not so surely as to tell her so till one day when the next spring was round again. She was standing at the window. They had thought of going out to Kew Gardens. The sky was overcast. From all the signs she had given him, he had prophesied rain. Then suddenly, she said:

"The glass is going up."

"What glass?"

He had no weather-glass. Who kept a weather-glass in Red Lion Square?

"Come over here," she said. She had not moved to help him. It was not his dependence she wanted. But he found her hand stretched out, a welcome to the touch of his own. He stood at the window with the air on his face.

"What do you mean—glass going up?"

ne asked.

"Do you remember a pavement artist? Down in the Square?"

"What about him?"

"He came yesterday—looked at his washed-out drawings and then went away. He was quite right. It rained. He's just come again, this morning. Outside the offices of those carpet people. There isn't a trace of his drawings left. The pavement's all wet. He's looking up at the sky. Glass is still going up. He's rubbing the pavement with a cloth. Funny little man. Sandy hair round the back of his neck. Top of his head's bald and shines like a blood-alley."

He put his arm round her. His hand lay across her breast. She knew he loved her.

"What do you know about blood-alleys?" he asked.

She knew nothing, but insisted that bald head below there was like a blood-alley. His face was turned to the sky, but he was watching the pavement artist.

"We're going to Kew," she said. "It's going to be fine. He's unrolled his bag of chalks. Go and get your hat and coat on. Fair, with a moderate temperature. Wind in the south-west. That's the weather

report. Visibility good."

"More than good," said he. "The visibility is wonderful." His hand was still about her breast as he drew her face to his and kissed her lips for the beauty he saw in them. They stood there in each other's arms at the open window. And he could not see the faces in Red Lion Square that peeped at them. And she would not spoil it by telling him.

The name of Michael Brydone was finding its way to people's minds. There was a public talking about him. A certain shyness about his infirmity kept him to Leah's society. He wanted no other. But his publisher persuaded him one day to an At Home. He did not say, "Your blindness is a good stunt for publicity——" but

that was what he felt about it. Both Michael's mind and Leah's were too simple to realise this. They went like children to a party. She dressed him up in a tail-coat and white waistcoat he had not worn for two years.

muffled. He had her hand. He pressed it and asked her why-that sudden end of laughter.

I was looking at myself in the mirror,"

she said.

" Well-



"He turned round to the direction of her voice. 'Are you as beautiful as all that?' he asked."

He felt her dress with his hands. told him all about it.

"Don't let anyone fall in love with you," he said.

She laughed. Then her laughter broke off, with no ring in it—like a bell suddenly

"I wonder if you'd love me if you saw me ? "

He took her bare arm and, in the inner curve of it, bending her elbow, he kissed her. She felt as though he had kissed her whole body for its beauty, and he said,

"I never thought I had such sight until I knew you."

It was a crowded party. Michael Brydone did not realise he had so many friends who sympathised with him because of his blindness. Everyone wanted to talk to him. They took him away from his wife. heard Leah's voice sometimes across the room. When he could not hear it he felt the darkness round him made dense by the strange voices of all these he could not see. It was an effort to control his fretfulness when he could not see her in the sound of her voice. It was an effort not to ask them to bring her to him.

He was sitting in a corner of the room with a man who had reviewed his work and wanted to get more closely at his personality. He was answering questions that meant nothing to him when they did not seem frankly impertinent. He had never felt his blindness so keenly in the handicap of his life. Then he heard the voices of a man and woman close by him.

The journalist was not aware of them. He was too engrossed in this opportunity of finding the Michael Brydone of the verses. They were talking about different people in the room. Taking them and stripping them and laughing at them and leaving them.

"Who's that woman over there, talking to the editor of the Centurion?"

"That's the woman who married Brydone."

" Is he here?"

"Don't know-never met him."

"How do you know her?"

"Just been introduced."

"His typist—wasn't she?"

"Looks like it."

"Got her when he went blind, didn't he?"

"Should think so. Wouldn't have as plain a face as that sitting opposite to him for breakfast if he could see it—surely. Always writing about beauty in women-haven't you noticed that? Seems to think beauty's a thing in itself—skin-deep. -she can't disillusion him now."

"I should have thought the plainness of a woman like that would have penetrated—

wouldn't you?"

The voices died away. The journalist was saying:

"I can't understand where you get your colour from. If you don't mind my saying so, you've got more sheer colour of words in your last book than you've ever had before. Don't you think that's extraordinary?"

"Yes—" said Michael—" Yes—I'm sure. I've felt that myself. It's-it's been inevitable. Would you be so good as to find my wife and tell her I think we ought to be

getting home."

The request was sharp. The journalist rose at once. He was left alone in a great darkness. He felt he was wrestling like Jacob in the wilderness. He would not be overcome. The sound of Leah's voice approaching, saved him.

"I'm tired," he said. "D'you mind?" She was glad to be with him again.

All the way back in the taxi he held her hand but said nothing. Their party was over. She felt the reaction in his mood. She would not bother him with silly ques-

In the full darkness of their room, when he had heard her turn off the electric switch, he felt the confidence of his sight slowly returning. Leah found him putting out his hand and touching her face.

"What is it?" she asked.
"Your face," he said. "Just let me touch your face with my hand."

As once before, and often since then, he drew his fingers down the line of her forehead, across her brows and about her lips. Her lips kissed his fingers as they passed to her chin.

"How lovely you are," he whispered. "If I could see you now, if I had my eyes again, I couldn't know it better. Do you notice how often in my work I talk about beauty in a woman as though it were a thing in itself?"

"Yes-often. I've wondered sometimes if you would continue to do so if you could

"I do see you-my dear-I do see-so much clearer than any of them."

She lay close to him, trembling to know she was lovely.

The little clock on the mantelpiece in the next room was saying "Tick-tuck, ticktuck."



ENGLAND'S FUTURE IN THE TESTS

By JACK HOBBS

HATEVER may be the ultimate result of this summer's cricket test matches in England, whether we take the "Ashes" of English cricket again into our own keeping or whether they return to Australia in possession of the present visiting side, I believe our post-war mood of depression will have passed for a long time. For if English cricket has not come into its own again in full measure there are signs that it will have done so before we have to select the team to go to Australia in 1928, and that means that our men will challenge the best that Australia can pit against them with better than an even chance of emerging victorious.

I suppose it is difficult for those who cannot cast their minds back to the test matches played before the war and are suffering from the effect of the after-war super-confidence of the Australian players and Press to realise that it used to be the English players, and not the Australian, who faced these tests with abundant confidence in their own powers.

Certainly the Australians were optimists. They ever have been. But optimism and confidence are two different qualities. I can recall when even optimism failed the Australian players, Press, and public. That was during the end of our 1911–12 tour in Australia, when after losing the first test match we proceeded to win the remaining four. If ever a cricket team were beaten before they started a match it was the Australian elevens who contested the last couple of tests in that tour.

Our incomparable pair of bowlers, F. R. Foster and S. F. Barnes, had established such an ascendancy over the Australian batsmen that I believe almost every Australian batsman regarded the task of his side

as something in the nature of a forlorn hope. Gamely indeed each man struggled, but it was as one who knew that nothing could stave off inevitable defeat.

Previously to this summer we had played Australia at cricket since the war fifteen times, had lost on twelve occasions, drawn twice and won only one game. A pitiable record, no doubt. All the more pitiable when contrasted with England's record in the ninety-four test matches that had been played up to the outbreak of war. But that very contrast should have silenced the lamentations of those who were loudest in their criticisms of our players and should have suggested a sufficient explanation.

It is patent to anyone who has studied the history and records of England v. Australia pre-war cricket matches that at scarcely any time was England definitely inferior. On the contrary, the odds before most of the series were generally in favour of England. In short, English cricket was a little better than Australian.

Whence, then, the extraordinary change since 1920? The explanation as I have suggested is not far to seek and it is summed up in the one word—WAR. That the war was a shattering blow to England's youth and therefore to English cricket is surely knowledge sufficiently common to require no argument. Australia also did nobly in the same cause and suffered severely, but the ordinary life of the community which was so completely paralysed or diverted in England was not so seriously affected in Australia, and the after effects on cricket were not so shattering.

Not only was it that England lost cricketers who would have been of great value to us in the test matches played immediately after the war, but it dammed

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at its source the flow of the right sort of recruits to the first-class game. Young cricketers who would have been perfecting themselves for places in the professional ranks of the counties were checked in their development, swept into the army, and their activities diverted to the sterner game in Flanders and elsewhere.

Four or five years lost in the life of a cricketer, and that at the most receptive age for the game, is a "knock-out" blow to the development of his talents. He is like a boy whose schooling has been interrupted for several years who then tries to make up the deficiency when a young man. He is attempting a task always difficult, frequently impossible. He has passed that inquiring and imitative age which counts so much in education.

So it is with the young cricketer who has dropped his game for several years. He may take up the game where he left off, but he can never hope to make the progress that would have been possible but for the interruption. Those lost years can never be recalled.

Games were popular in the army and opportunities for a certain form of indulgence in them were not lacking. But they were but a poor substitute for the regular practice, well-organised matches, and sound pitches of the peace period. War cricket was largely a haphazard affair of scratch teams and rough-and-ready grounds.

One great recruiting ground for the firstclass cricket game was as good as closed entirely. The English public schools and universities were neither turning out the ready-made article, as was their wont, nor were they preparing the aspiring youngsters who follow in the footsteps of the older students. The Moloch of war swallowed them up. The effect of all this was disastrous. The standard of English cricket fell most appreciably, and as illustrating that decline a close study of the pre-war and post-war records is most eloquent.

Of those ninety-four matches between England and Australia before the war England had won forty and Australia thirty-five, the remaining nineteen having

But the bare figures do not indicate the full measure of England's superiority in the international trials of cricket strength. A careful analysis shows that of the ninety-four pre-war test matches fifty-two were played in Australia and only forty-two in England. This is important, as a further

inspection of the figures proves that the Australians have always been most successful on their own wickets and under their native conditions.

Of the fifty which were played to a decision in Australia the home side won twenty-seven and the Englishmen were successful in twenty-three. Now contrast this with the twenty-five pre-war tests played to a decision in England, of which Australia lost seventeen and was successful in but eight. The majority of the pre-war tests being decided in Australia must therefore have helped considerably to improve the Australian record. But even so their figures up to the war were inferior to those of England.

What has happened since the war? Out of fifteen test matches previous to this season we have lost twelve and won only one of the other three. Such a contrast in results could scarcely have happened but from an extraordinary cause, such as the war.

And in this respect it is not out of place to point out that English superiority was probably never more pronounced than immediately before the war. In our 1911–12 tour in Australia we won four out of the five test matches and in the succeeding Australian tour in this country in 1912 England won the rubber by a victory in the only test match played to a decision that summer.

With practically no young blood of the right calibre to call upon we were in the position in 1919 that we had only the older first-class players who had survived the war period, and many of them had decided during the long break in the game that it was inadvisable to resume. The mere flux of time had added to the devastation of war, thinning the cricket ranks and yet adding nothing to the talents of the experienced players who remained.

No wonder the quality of English cricket was at such a low ebb, probably lower than at any previous period of its history in its lack of outstanding players of the highest class. It was in these circumstances that we took the Ashes to Australia and lost them in the disastrous campaign of 1920–21, and up to this summer had not regained them after two further attempts almost equally disastrous.

Are there signs that the flow of good-class young recruits to English cricket has resumed its normal volume? There are most encouraging signs. Already several players of great promise have "arrived." Consider a few of those names: Lilley and Larwood of Nottinghamshire, Hallows, Watson and

Sibbles of Lancashire, Hammond of Gloucestershire, K. S. Duleepsinhji and C. H. Gibson of Sussex, G. T. S. Stevens and G. O. Allen of Middlesex. I do not say that all these will prove of test-match quality, but all are players of great promise and that

another bowling "star" in the making may emerge. It should not be forgotten that Maurice Tate's advance to the front rank was surprisingly rapid. He was not even considered as a possible test-match proposition on the occasion of the Australians'

last visit here in 1921—five years ago. And yet eighteen months ago the Australians were placing him on the same plane as S. F. Barnes. Tate could have no greater tribute.

0 fcourse Maurice Tate was bowling in county cricket in 1921, but his acceptance as a really great bowler coincided with a radical change in his style. Just after the war the Sussex man was slowbowler $_{
m with}$ an occasional fast delivery. He developed into a fastish bowler with an occasional slow ball, delivered less frequently even than his former fast

Writing before the English form of the present summer has shaken itself down, I have heard good reports of the possibilities of Clark, the Northampton bowler. Before

the season started I had not seen Clark, as Surrey does not play Northamptonshire, but I have been assured that Clark's good figures of eighty-four wickets at an average cost of under eighteen last season did not fully indicate the merits of this bowler.

He has developed into a capable medium



JACK HOBBS.

Photograph by Reginald Haines, supplied by Central News.

several of them will appear in test matches for England is practically certain; which of them depends upon the further developments of their talents.

Many of the counties are now finding suitable recruits clamouring for admission to the highest ranks, and at any moment to fast left-hander of accurate length, pace from the pitch and occasional swerve. If not actually fast, he is sometimes near enough to come under the classification, and besides his swerve has a decided leg break. If experience teaches him to vary his pace and pitch judiciously he might easily prove a great bowler.

A good fast left-hander would be a notable addition to England's bowling strength. A bowler of this style and pace must inevitably remind us of Mr. F. R. Foster, the former Warwickshire skipper, who was such a success against the Australians; it was a tremendous blow for English cricket when Mr. Foster's career on the playing fields was so prematurely cut short by a motor accident. What a help he would have been in 1920 and 1921, and most probably in the last tour, for he would then have been only thirty-five years of age.

Other young bowlers of promise are Wensley of Sussex, who is of medium pace, and R. J. O. Meyer of Cambridge, whose development into the highest class is confidently expected. Indeed, he is already a fine bowler, medium, right-hand, but it is more of his future possibilities I am thinking. He is quite young, as one would expect of a Cambridge student, and as he was bowled a little too much last season, judicious nursing may greatly develop his talents as his physique matures. If available, there is no saying how soon this young amateur may be wanted by England.

Altogether there is sound reason for thinking that the restoration of England's old-time cricket supremacy is not far off, whatever may happen in the Tests this summer, for there is no falling off in the enthusiasm of England's youth for the great summer sport. Our native aptitude will do the rest.

In these days when international cricket bulks so largely in English life it is strange to think of the casual fashion in which the earliest test games were arranged and carried through; an Australian team coming over here without even a county fixture they were sure of, and a match with England as a belated recognition of their presence and fixed up on a few weeks' notice; England teams taken to Australia as the private venture of a few professionals and their doings reported in the Press by the brief cabled announcements, "The English cricket team defeated the Australians by — wickets" or "Australia won the second match against the English cricketers by — runs. Scores: Australia — and —, England — and —." They seem far-off days now.

Followers of the game, whether in England or Australia, nowadays demand long cabled reports of each day's play wherein, if every ball is not detailed, almost every over bowled is mentioned, and nothing that can fairly be described as an "incident" is overlooked. Criticism and appreciation of each day's play follow hard on the heels of description. But it has always struck me as curious that the newspapers often give more space to a test match twelve thousand miles away than to a similar match played within a few miles of their offices.



SUMMER EVENSONG.

LET me in golden summer die,
And to a garden carry me;
I would hear mowing where I lie,
And a bird singing from a tree.

Let me, the moment when I go,
Into a rose resign my breath,
And, dying quietly, not know
If it is twilight come, or death.
WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



"She was the most devoted of all his aunts, and the richest and the least robust, and sometimes Bobby when he was not thinking what he was thinking about allowed himself to think about Aunt Fanny's entire lack of relations,"

AUNTS AND PIANOS

By E. F. BENSON

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

OBBY DEACON at the age of fifty-five was a very busy young man; no one had so many engagements to little lunch-parties and tea-parties and dinnerparties. He had in fact made a firm rule never to do a cross-word puzzle till the evening paper came in, for, if he permitted himself to attack one after lunch, the brisk walk he took every day for the preservation of his youthful figure was sadly curtailed, while if he yielded to temptation after breakfast there was no telling when he would get to his piano, which was the serious work of the day. He played prettily with a butterflytouch which flitted over the keys with an agreeable lightness, and in his drawing-room, which he called "the music-room," there were two grand-pianos. He had bought

one himself, the other had lately been left him by a charming old lady with whom he used to play simple duets. She had in her will expressed a hope that he would often use it, and think of the melodious hours they had spent together. So Bobby, who was of a very affectionate and sentimental nature, constantly played on it, though it was thin and stiff and of a chirping tone, and did not suit the butterfly-touch. In fact, it was very bad for the butterfly-touch, for you had to slap the notes, instead of just alighting on them and sipping their honey. He alluded to the instrument always as "Aunt Martha," by which endearing title he had always addressed the deceased who, though no relation of his, was thus adopted by affection. Martha had been her Christian name, and

"Aunt" was added out of respect for her superior years. "I had a good go with Aunt Martha this morning," was Bobby's bright way of telling his friends at lunch that he had been very industrious.

Bobby lived a good deal among aunts of this description; most of the little lunches and teas and dinners which filled up so large a part of his busy day were taken at the houses of elderly ladies, widows and spinsters for the most part, who called him Bobby or naughty boy. They lived chiefly in the Boltons, or, as Bobby said, the Bromptons, and told him all about their troubles with kitchen-maids, their difficulties in getting the right shades of silk for their embroidery, the aches they had in their venerable joints in this cold weather, and their plans for their holidays. Bobby listened with sympathetic interest to all these deep problems of life, and cheered them up with amusing little bits of gossip from Mayfair, where he often went to tea, and did cross-word puzzles with Dowager Countesses. Bobby did not dine or lunch much with those modish dames, but he was in considerable request at teatime when men were at their clubs or not yet back from their offices. This suited him very well, for, though quite sociable, he did not care for the society of his own sex, and felt that they had not much to say to each other, for he took no interest in masculine topics, such as sport and games. Nor did he care for the society of girls, and though he really took great pains in order to interest and amuse them with the little stories the aunts liked so much (though they bridled and called him naughty), sometimes a girl would burst out laughing quite unexpectedly and call him a dear old thing, which he thought singularly irrelevant as well as quite untrue. Or else she would merely yawn, which was rude.... Girls all seemed to him to be indistinguishable from each other with their cropped hair, and long sunburned-stockinged legs. . . .

"And it's even worse if they've got hats on," said Bobby to Mrs. Fakenham, who had lately become Aunt Judy, "and then I never recognise them at all. If men wore on their heads scarlet straw waste-paper baskets which came down to the end of their noses, and painted their lips the colour of their hats, and never took a cigarette out of their mouths, they wouldn't expect to be recognised. But girls do expect me to recognise them, Aunt Judy. I can't bother myself

with them."

Aunt Judy sneezed several times, for she

had a frantic cold in her head, and then held up a reproving forefinger.

"You're a very spoilt boy," she said wheezily. "You don't take any trouble with girls."

"Indeed I do," said Bobby, "but I never know who they are, or what to talk to them about. Even if they are pretty I can't see their faces, and when they take their hats off, I think they're boys, and boys are odious. I'm glad there are no boys or girls here to-night."

Aunt Judy had distinct remains of coquettishness about her.

"Nonsense, Bobby," she said. "Fancy your pretending that you prefer to come and dine alone with an old woman like me to having some pretty girl to take in to dinner. But I thought I would be selfish to-night, and have you all to myself. Next Thursday, when you're dining with me again, there will be a little party, and you'll have to be host at dinner, and play to us afterwards."

"I shall enjoy to-night most," said Bobby,

who always flattered his aunts.

Aunt Judy, as usual, gave him a remarkably good dinner, and Bobby, who was greedy, liked that. A cross-word puzzle succeeded, and as he had done a little work at it already (though it was not necessary to mention that), he was very brilliant about it. Then Aunt Judy thought she would like to try Brahms's Hungarian dances arranged for four hands, and of course Bobby had to say that he positively preferred playing the bass, which was tactful though false. deed, playing the piano at all in Aunt Judy's house was always a trial, for the instrument was an antique Hobbner concertgrand of ear-splitting quality with two notes in the bass that stuck when struck and wouldn't leave off sounding, and one that produced no sound at all. And playing with Aunt Judy did not mend matters, for she filled up most of the seating capacity opposite the keyboard, and Bobby was squeezed away at the lower end of it, where he could hardly see the music. When in action, Aunt Judy kept her foot firmly on the loud pedal, counted in a hoarse voice, and corrected her own wrong notes, so that her counting got out, and it was impossible to tell where she was. But she enjoyed it immensely and at the end of a strenuous hour, patted his hand, and said it was a pleasure to play with him.

Bobby edged himself away when it was over, and Aunt Judy, as usual, with all the piano at her disposal, played the short pre-

lude by Chopin with the slow big chords. "Splendid!" said Bobby. "You played that divinely."

She played it again and rose.

"I am proud of my piano," she said. "Magnificent tone, is it not? My dear husband chose it for me, and it was always reckoned a very fine instrument. Now we'll have a little gossip over the fire while you drink your whisky-and-soda. Dear me, what a dreadful cold I've got! And there are a hundred things I must do to-morrow."

"If I were you I should stop at home and nurse it in this bitter weather," said Bobby.

"Not at all!" said Aunt Judy. "Disregard a cold: that's the way to get rid of it."

Bobby also was full of engagements next day. He went to lunch with Mrs. Trask (Aunt Fanny), who in her faint and remote voice sang "Ich Grolle Nicht," and several other courageous songs, which he accompanied for her on her new and rather unripe Boddington grand. She was the most devoted of all his aunts, and the richest and the least robust, and sometimes Bobby when he was not thinking what he was thinking about allowed himself to think about Aunt Fanny's entire lack of relations. . . . When Aunt Fanny had finished singing, she sank, rather exhausted, on to a small chair encrusted with mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell. Aunt Fanny was very small and all her furniture with the exception of her grandpiano was small and fragile, and Bobby trembled to think how awful would have been the crash if Aunt Judy had sunk exhausted on that chair, or indeed anywhere in Aunt Fanny's house except on the floor. But that was not likely to happen, for he never brought the aunts into contact with each other, feeling, vaguely but correctly, that each individual aunt would take less tender interest in him, if she knew there were others.

"No one sings 'Ich Grolle Nicht' so beautifully as you, Aunt Fanny," he said. "I can't think why it should be considered only a man's song. You make it so deliciously feminine without losing any of its bravery. And your new piano is quite splendid. You were lucky to get such a beauty. It will improve too."

"I'm glad you like it," said Aunt Fanny. "It wants playing on, but I think it will be satisfactory."

Bobby applied the butterfly-touch to the keys, and got a fair effect.

"Satisfactory! I should think so," he

said. "And as for its wanting to be played on, there's somebody who wants to play on it whenever he's allowed."

Bobby slid into a fluid little morsel by De Bussy, which was a favourite of Aunt Fanny's, though Aunt Judy declared that it sounded to her like a child whimpering next door. It made Aunt Fanny feel ill and unhappy, which she liked, for one of the greatest joys of her life was feeling ill and thinking she was going to die. She gave a wan little smile when Bobby had finished.

"So sweet and miserable!" she said. "Thank you, dear. And now, Bobby, I've got something to tell you. Perhaps you wondered why I sang those songs just now. It was to make myself brave. I've got to be brave."

"Dear Aunt Fanny, what's the matter?" asked Bobby. "You're not ill, not particularly ill, I mean?"

"Not worse than usual," she said. "But my doctor has told me that it would be most unwise of me—suicidal, indeed, he said, when I pressed him—to spend the winter in England. I've got to go south, and I shall let this house for six months. A terrible wrench. And you'll miss me, dear, I know."

"It will be horrid without you," said Bobby warmly.

Aunt Fanny sighed.

"I dare say I shall never see England again," she said, "and I think it is only wise to make all arrangements before I go. I shall let this house, as I said; indeed, I've got a very good offer for it, but I don't want to leave my new piano to be strummed on. So will you house it for me, Bobby, while I'm away? I remember your saying that your music-room was often so cold, and I thought you would like it in your dear little sitting-room by the front door."

It seemed to Bobby that Aunt Fanny might store it, for he didn't want it at all, but it would never do to reject any kind idea of Aunt Fanny's. It was much wiser to accept it with alacrity and enthusiasm.

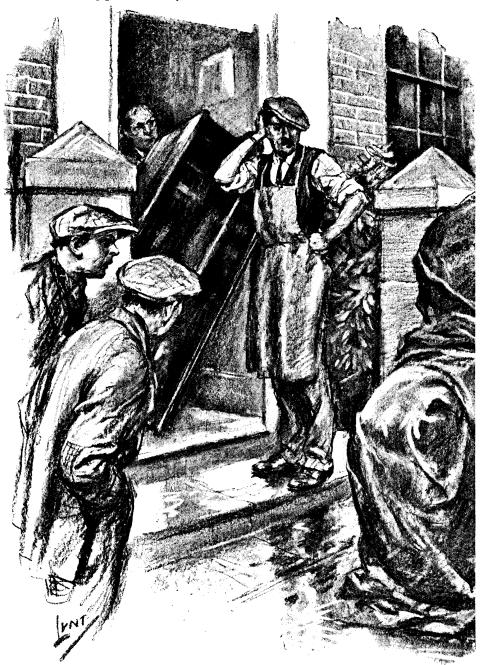
"Oh, that is good of you, Aunt Fanny," he said. "Fancy my having that delicious piano to play on cosily in my little den. Every time I play it I shall think of you."

"I thought you would like it," she said. "And I shall think of you playing on it when I am far away. And if I never come back, as seems likely, I have left it you in my will."

She gave a little gulp.

"You will have many happy years to play on it after I am gone, Bobby," she said. She talked about her journey a little more, as if it had been the conveyance of a corpse to its final resting-place. Bobby cheered

that it was to be taken to his house next week on the day that Aunt Fanny started for the Riviera. After that it was time for



"On the pavement outside his door, shielded by a tarpaulin from the inclemencies of the weatner, stood the smaller Cousin Ella, while the larger Aunt Fanny completely blocked the narrow passage within."

her up, and, since Aunt Fanny made no suggestion of sending the piano to him, it was settled that he should notify the makers Bobby to hurry off to Curzon Street for tea, where he did a cross-word puzzle with a Marchioness.

Bobby dined that night with Miss Patttson, who was not old enough to be his aunt, for she was only a year or two his senior, and therefore was Cousin Ella. It was always lively at Cousin Ella's, though she occasionally frightened Bobby by telling him that he ought to marry, and then casting her eyes modestly down. But she had said so with such frequency that Bobby had begun to think that she didn't really mean that; besides, if she had intended to marry him she would probably have proposed to

was music, for Cousin Ella had a set of jazz-band instruments which she played fortissimo while Bobby thumped her Boddington boudoir-grand and tried in vain to make himself heard. When they were both thoroughly exhausted they sat over the fire, Cousin Ella in a very low chair, showing an incredible length of brawny leg.

Cousin Ella often gave Bobby delightful presents, for like most of the ladies he had chosen as aunts and cousins, she was very well off. Last Christmas she had given him



him by now. He preferred, however, that there should be other guests at Cousin Ella's, but to-night, as last night with Aunt Judy, he was alone with her. As usual there

a beautiful fur-coat and on his last birthday, now nearly a year ago, a handsome Chippendale mirror, and books and flowers were constantly showered on him; indeed, he seldom left the house without something pretty or useful. She lived in Cromwell Road, but, except for a party, never used the big rooms upstairs, preferring the cosiness of the little sitting-room on the ground floor, where they sat now.

"I'm going to make a change in this room, Bobby," she said. "I'm going to hoof out the boudoir-grand and have a cottage piano. Makes more room."

"Oh, don't do that," said Bobby, "it's such a delicious one. Or perhaps you're

meaning to have it upstairs."

"No, I shan't do that," said Cousin Ella, "I don't want a piano there. I'll tell you what I'm going to do with it. It's somebody's birthday next week, Bobby!"

Bobby had a feeling, like that in dreams, when the sleeper is aware that a nightmare

is coming.

"Yes?" he faltered.

"Well, it's my birthday present to you, Bobby. You always tell me what a lovely piano it is, and I shall love giving it you. There! Send round for it as soon as you like, for my new one is coming next week. Such a joy it will be to think of your playing on it."

"Cousin Ella, it's too good of you," began Bobby. "But—"

"There isn't a 'but'," said Cousin Ella.

"I'm determined you shall have it. Don't thank me, dear: I love giving it you, for I know how you'll appreciate it. Order a van from Boddington's and it will be ready for you."

Bobby wrote to Boddington's next morning, asking that a van should be sent on Wednesday next, first to Aunt Fanny's to fetch her piano to his house, and then to Cousin Ella's, to fetch hers. He had just written this, when he was rung up from Aunt Judy's to be told that her dinner was put off, as she was seriously ill with double pneumonia. . . . Poor Aunt Judy died on Saturday, and the funeral was fixed for the following Wednesday. Bobby was very much distressed and ordered some black clothes in a great hurry.

He went to the funeral on Wednesday, leaving word with his parlour-maid that two grand-pianos would presently arrive, of which the larger was to be put in the little sitting-room by the front-door, and the smaller in the music-room. He thanked Heaven that the latter was only a boudoirgrand, but, even as it was, so much furniture had to be moved out of the two rooms into

the dining-room that it was difficult to see how food could possibly be dispensed there. But he could sell some of his larger pieces, and though four pianos was in excess of bare musical requirements, Bobby's sentimental nature still went out in gratitude to the kind donors of these instruments. He might, of course, also sell his own admirable Bilhausen, but he did not want to do that, since it was far the best of the lot, so it and Aunt Martha and Cousin Ella would be fitted into the music-room, and Aunt Fanny into the little sitting-room. And he hurried away to Golder's Green.

A light drizzle was falling, and when he came back, cold and damp and depressed from the last sad rites, it was clear that troublesome things were happening. the pavement outside his door, shielded by a tarpaulin from the inclemencies of the weather, stood the smaller Cousin Ella, while the larger Aunt Fanny completely blocked the narrow passage within. By no sleight of hand, so the pessimistic foreman told him, could she possibly be introduced into the little room for which she was intended unless the window were taken out, the area-railings pulled up, and a crane erected to swing her Even then this engineering feat seemed highly risky, for the balcony of the room above, where the crane must be placed. would probably give way, and Aunt Fanny be precipitated into the area, with or without loss of life, and completely block up the entrance to the coal-cellar. It would be possible, however, though difficult, to entice Aunt Fanny into the music-room, and get Cousin Ella into the little sitting-room. About nightfall this was accomplished, and Bobby paid an outrageous cheque to the foreman.

Dining-room, music-room and sittingroom were now tightly packed. It was perhaps possible for a slim man like Bobby to get access to the keyboard of any of the three gigantic instruments which filled the music-room, but no fire could possibly be lit there, since Aunt Fanny's thin end projected over the grate, and the idea of holding any little musical party there again was simply laughable. Bobby's small sittingroom was also quite ruined, for Cousin Ella had crowded out the sofa and the writingtable, while the dining-room was like a well-stocked furniture shop. Bobby ate a miserable dinner under the disapproving eye of his parlour-maid, who looked as if she was going to give notice, and wandered from room to room disconsolately, unable to think of any plan which would render any of them habitable.

The smart rap of the delivery of the nine-o'clock post gave him a slight ray of comfort: there would probably be some pleasant invitations to lunch or dinner. . . . He went to the door, but found in his letter-box only a long envelope with a type-written address, which looked as if it might be connected with taxes. He opened it, and found it was from Aunt Judy's lawyer.

"The late Mrs. Fakenham," he read, "has left you in her will her grand-piano by Hobbner, with a touching and affectionate message, expressing the hope that you will spend many pleasant hours in playing it with kind thoughts of the donor. As there is to be a sale in the house almost immediately, we should esteem it a favour if you would make arrangements for transporting the instrument to your own residence as soon as possible. . . ."



TO ONE WHO FOLLOWS AFTER.

WHEN I have passed and lie beneath this earth, Which I have loved for many happy years, And share no more life's sorrows or its mirth, Have laughed my last and wept the final tears; Oh, when you then stand 'neath the starry sky Upon the summit of some windy hill, And listen to the wind as even I Was wont to do, who lie so quiet and still; Think then on me, O Friend I have not known, That I did joy and once was glad like you, In all those things which now you count your own, The windy hill, the star-decked sky, the dew.

And when you see the road stretched out afar
A-winding whitely up athwart a hill,
And dip to where cool running waters are
That lap the silence of woods, calm and still;
Think then: "He passed along such roads as this,
And knew their bends and all their hidden ways,
And counted it a moment of life's bliss
To travel thus, and thus to spend his days."

And when you see, as evening bells ring low,
Thro' the dim dusk of swift-descending night,
The friendly lights of cottages aglow,
Remember 'twas to me an old delight.
And if men greet you as you go your way
Thro' country lanes on to your journey's end,
Remember, as you pass the time of day
With them, how oft I did the same, O Friend!
JOHN INGLISHAM.

THE SALVING OF PYACK

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

T fell on a night in the bitter season of the year, that Peeguk, the Flat-footed One, was heavy of heart. Unorri, the North Wind, had been pressing down out of Boothia Gulf for weeks past with a weight so heavy that it could be felt through the twelve-inch walls of his igloo, and now he stared moodily at Oomgah, the Moon-faced One, a moody question in his black eyes. She sat huddled on the snow bench, holding close a shapeless bundle. The bundle was Pyack, the Late Comer, now nine months old. Pyack had arrived in the spring of last year with the grey geese from the south.

The heart of Peeguk felt torn in many pieces. The stone lamp was fed by a shred of seal fat, and when that was consumed there would follow a great darkness. It was hard to be hungry in the dark. One would also be cold. So there were three enemies to be faced at once. The reason it would be cold was that when the fires of the body run low for lack of fuel, there are opened mysterious passages by which the enemy of frost may enter. And he always does. They both knew this.

For many days the north had been shrinking, flattening and cowering beneath the onslaught of Unorri. Ridges were smoothed out, and crowned by long, crystalline folds from which was whipped constantly a fine dry rain of powdery snow, paralleling the earth six feet deep, a stinging, driving punishment that the lord of the north himself did not care to face. No food was afoot, no track of pad or claw imprinted that vast and chilling blanket, so that even the grey wolf ravened unfed. And when he starves there be many furred bellies that go empty.

Peeguk, in the past month, had worked inland from Boothia Gulf, much further inland than he had ever been before. This because the ice had jammed thick and solid

against the coast, vomiting up great pressure ridges thirty feet high, so that the airholes of the jar seal were almost impossible to find, and for the first time in Peeguk's life the ocean had ceased to be his larder. That, and the weight of the unending storm, drove him south in search of caribou. He had saved a little seal fat for Pyack and the stone lamp.

It seemed that there were no caribou. Day after day he scourged his dogs over the empty plain, and night after night saw them staggering back unsatisfied. Their ribs projected like barrel hoops, their flanks were dry sinew, their pads were cracked and bleeding, the pointed ears lay flat on the lean skulls and the bony shoulders thrust loose into their walrus-hide collars. One morning he found four dogs instead of five, and a week later only three. Now three dogs cannot pull a sledge with a woman and child and the family gear—even three that were not famishing. This fact moved poignantly in Peeguk's mind as he stared at his wife.

"I will kill one myself," he said after an hour's silence.

She held the Late Comer a little closer. Without dogs a man cannot travel. In the north he who travels not starves—with those who be with him. On the other hand there was no milk in her breast now—but only love, and Pyack could not be fed on love. Were this possible, he would be fat—very fat. What frightened her was the alternative with which they were faced.

"Can we not wait another day?"

· "The dogs will not wait. Never before have I known one dog to eat another. It is a very great hunger."

The Late Comer gave a weak whimper, and she felt the small lips pucker, questingly, against her side.

"Eyah, my husband! And what then?"



and nothing stirs."

He crawled out next morning, and grimly surveyed his dogs, half buried in the snow. Their narrow eyes never left him. Which, he pondered, should he kill? Not the blackeared bitch that led the team. two were younger. With bitterness in his heart he approached the nearest, but the ' starved brute caught the murder in his glance, and leaped away. He flung his spear—and missed! He, Peeguk, missed!

The fact sobered him. Too late to do anything more, for all three were circling warily, just out of range, as wise as he, and as loving of their hard-bitten life. Dog against man it would be now, and what end might not come to this. The long hair bristled on the lean backs, and, his heart growing cold within him, he turned and crawled in toward Oomgah.

"The dogs-they know. I tried to kill one, and missed. They are now our enemies. I go to hunt again, so you will stay here.

Do not come out."

He stooped over her, and, very gently, touched the hidden head of the Late Comer. Oomgah did not speak, but looked steadfastly into his eyes. It was all there, the fidelity and tragedy of the life they had shared together. She wished that Pyack had not arrived—it hurt her so when he cried. But evidently they were all about to die together, and Pyack had been hungry—really hungry—only for three days. The skin was drawn tight, like brown parchment, over Peeguk's face, his voice was hollow, and she knew the strength

which had been her pride and safety had run out of his back and arms and legs. It might be that he would not return to the igloo, but die in the open, in which case the dogs-or the wolves-would find him. If he did not come back she could only seal up the entrance with a block of snow, cover her face—and wait. So, because she was aware of all this, and knew that he also was aware, she spoke no word, but only nodded. Then Peeguk stooped, and went out.

He could never remember much about that day, except that the dogs were with him, keeping a hundred yards off, one behind, one on each side. Or were they wolves? He was not quite sure, but they appeared through the snow flurries, moving like phantoms that gave no tongue. The wind did not seem so heavy. He had curious visions of square-flipper seals basking, of salmon crowding up to the shallow spawning grounds, half-feathered geese waddling near their nests, stranded whales, cow walrus, very sleek and fat, sunning themselvesand all this within a spear's length. But something told him they were not really there—only the dogs.

come back—though emptyhanded; bent, snow-plastered, feet that dragged, his inward fires burning low, his visage a frosted mask through which the eyes of the man glowed, hot and desperate. Caribou were in the country! He had seen them, miles away, drifting, a ghostly herd, across the horizon with life, heat and salvation in their round and jostling bodies. followed for a while hoping that the wolves might pull one down, or one go lame. But none went lame, and the grey wolf hunted The dogs came back with him, elsewhere. squatting round the igloo, watching, waiting. Now that they feared each other, they kept the same distance apart. Peeguk knew what they waited for. But, he vowed, that would never be.

It was then that there came a rift in the wind. The stinging drive went out of the powdery snow. It settled, leaving the air clear. The drone of four weeks past softened to a whisper, and died. The seared feeling in his eyes lessened, and he saw a great white star burning in the south. In the same moment the old bitch put her black muzzle into the still air, sought out and captured some indefinite signal that reached her from the beyond, cocked her pointed ears, and began a tremulous whimper that swelled and consolidated into a long, long howl. The other two joined in.

The heart of Peeguk leaped within him, but he dared not stir. The dogs were looking south—where the star was. That meant other dogs, other life! Then, with a shriek, the wind began again, the powdery snow was once more driven like dust, the star vanished, and he was left sucking the ice block that covered his short bristly moustache. He stooped, saw the snow-plug at the entrance, kicked it away, and felt inside in the dark for Oomgah. He put his arm

round her shoulders.

"Come—we start now. There is a camp not far to the south."

"It is too late. My legs have turned to water, and I cannot walk."

"You need not walk. Put Pyack close to your heart, and sit on the sledge."

"You have the dogs again?"

"I am a dog to-night. Come!"

They lurched southward, wallowing through, she a squat pyramid of snow, he a staggering but indomitable figure, one with the storm itself, equalling its ferocity in the strength of one ultimate purpose, squaring his shoulders that the wind might aid him the more, his bones like aching rods, sinews like burning wires, the heart of him pumping defiantly, his whole tortured striving frame

calling up its last ounce of strength and resistance. Something lay to the south, how far he did not know, but something. The dogs had gone for it, but their trail was instantly obliterated. At times the star gleamed through, so he followed that, Oomgah swaying behind him with that which was dearer than life held close to her dry bosom, concentrating on that one beloved morsel all the warmth in her fainting body.

She did not know how long it lasted, but the sledge never stopped once. It seemed like hours after they started that she saw a gleam. It was the roofs of a cluster of tents, with high snow walls and lights inside. Then a great barking of dogs, and voices. She knew that Peeguk tried to lift her from the sledge, but fell in the snow and did not move

The rest of it was a dream. Oomgah woke, she felt warm and comfortable, with the Late Comer sleeping next her side. She lay very still, examining the tent with half-lidded eyes, soothed by a tide of strength that crept reassuringly through her body. No sound of wind now. Peeguk stretched on his back close by, his eyes shut, his face blistered with frost patches. Near Peeguk sat a white man who looked at them not at all but made a writing in something that she knew was a book. She wondered how he got the writing to put there. back of the tent was a small iron stove, and she recognised the odour of flaming oil, a different kind of oil. A lantern hung from the ridge-pole, this pole being the biggest piece of wood she had ever seen except when the whaler came ashore on Lost Island. There were piles of robes, and boxes. white man had a red face, red hands, a short brown beard, and his eyes were grey like the sea when the snow comes and the black swans fly south.

Another man came in, looked at the strangers, and handed the first one certain small things covered with snow. These being observed very closely, more writing was made in the book. Then the man said something, and went out. Soon after that the red-faced one stood beside Oomgah.

"You are better now?" He spoke in the Husky tongue, a little stiffly, but quite understandably.

She nodded.

"Your name?"

"Oomgah." She touched her breast. "There is also Pyack, of nine months." He smiled. "I have seen Pyack. And this man?"

"Peeguk, my husband."

"You have come far?"

"Two moons Oomgah did not know. ago we left the ice because there was no

What place is this?"

Macgregor's tawny brows lifted a little. He had been sent out by the Government at Ottawa to make records of temperature and snow-fall, and learn in general what might be learned of this section of the wind-whipped north. He saw these to be Coast Eskimo, and the spot where he now camped was three hundred miles from salt water.

"It is not any place, when I am gone.

How did you find me?"

Peeguk, who had opened his eyes, and was listening intently, made a sound in his

"The bitch, who is leader of my team, smelled something when the wind dropped. Then the storm came again covering the dogs' tracks, but there was a star, and I followed that."

"A star?" said Macgregor gravely. "There was nothing else to follow."

Silence spread in the tent, and Peeguk said no more, it not being his place to do the talking. Oomgah sent him a look, and touched her breast again. All was well with the Late Comer.

"And if there had been no star?"

Peeguk made a gesture. "I do not know. My strength had all run away."

He of the red face nodded. "You will eat now for the second time, only a little, for it is not well to fill an empty stomach too quickly."

"The second time?"

"Yes, the second time since last night." Peeguk marvelled, yet held his peace. But he wanted greatly to know about the dogs. Presently he asked.

"Their bellies are full. We are camped by a lake, and there are many fish under the

ice."

He disappeared, and a Yellowknife Indian brought food in bowls. Peeguk, like all Huskies, hated the Yellowknives, but this was no hour for hate. So he took the food from the slim brown fingers, and closed his eyes, burdened with a great wonder. The inward fire of his body was glowing now.

In the morning he stood on his feet, a man again. The storm had roared itself out, and the high clear sky held not a cloud. A bright sun transformed the wilderness into an interminable fleece, deep sprinkled with captured constellations. Their myriads of diamond facets sent out a blinding brilliancy

of refracted blue-white rays. Northward from camp stretched a nearly obliterated furrow that marked the tortuous passage of the sledge.

Macgregor, a quiet man, who had his own way of doing things, talked with Peeguk that day, saying that he needed a hunter, and the Yellowknives were of little use in those latitudes. The thing was settled with few words, and Peeguk told Oomgah as he punched his spear handle in the snow to find a drift wind-packed to the right point for igloo building.

"It is very simple. I shall have a rifle, better than the one I lost through the ice, and we shall reach the sea when the geese

come north."

"Perhaps it is well, but there was fear in my heart this morning."

"What kind of fear?"

" In the topeck the red-faced one opened a box. I saw many strange things small and black, as in a nest. These he fastened together at the top with fine iron sinews, very many of them. Then I saw four bottles, very small and standing up straight. There was light in those bottles, but no fire."

"You asked nothing of this?"

" No—it being in my mind that this was a devil box."

Peeguk scratched his head.

"I will speak to the red-faced one," he said gravely, "and it may be this will do no harm. I have only known of two kinds: one that speaks with a voice, and thereupon makes a noise like a dog scratching the ice; and that other at the Island, of which I told you. Keep silent, therefore, till I know

Oomgah kept very silent. Above all things, Pyack must not be exposed to any malign influence. She was very grateful to the red-faced one, and his eyes were kind, but to her all white men were mysterious. They had so many potent things at their command. So, when Peeguk finished the igloo, which he did very soon, slashing out the big curved blocks so that they fitted without any trimming, she crawled in thankfully, and felt much more at home. Peeguk, on the other hand, went straight to Mac-

"My woman says that you have a devil box in the topeck. Is there danger to the child?"

Macgregor understood perfectly. "There is danger to none. It is a spirit box, and not of devils."

Peeguk, knowing something about spirits,

felt happier. A spirit was the thing that went out of you when you died, went clean through the wall of your igloo, journeyed to find those of your family who had gone before, gave them the latest news, and lived with them thereafter in a place where there was much food and no wind.

"To-night," added Macgregor, "you shall hear it."

one as though to himself, "and over the clouds from far away." Then he laughed, while his eyes grew kinder than ever. travels like the eagle, but more swiftly. And to-night I think it will speak to you."

Peeguk immediately told all this to Oomgah, and she came out, and sat in the sun and watched Macgregor. He had set up two poles, and joined their tops with a



"Peeguk saw the light born in four small bottles, and held his breath."

"Does it make a noise like a dog scratching the ice when its speech is done?"

'No, not that one. Not always can I hear it myself, and but seldom in storms. But to-night will be fine, and "-here his voice softened and he looked oddly at Peeguk-" on this day it says that which is said on no other of all the year."

"How comes this voice?"

"Through caves of air," said the red-faced

long piece of iron sinew. From this he led another bit into his topeck, where he remained busy for quite a time, till suddenly sounded such a strange noise that the old bitch, whose ribs now bulged as though she had swallowed the Late Comer, put her tail between her legs and howled grievously. The other dogs joined in, whereat Peeguk beat them to silence.

Now the rest of that day was like any

other day, till, at nightfall, the red-faced one summoned all in camp to his topeck, leaving the door-flaps open. One could already see some stars, the biggest of them being that which Peeguk had followed. When all were seated, the Huskies furthest from the Yellowknives, Macgregor looked at his watch, and, nodding, put his hand in the spirit box. Peeguk saw the light born in four small bottles, and held his breath.

hidden trading post, and wherever man might spread his intercepting filaments.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night."

Thus sang the voice, and sang on, telling of a star that men followed while the world was young. Peeguk and Oomgah did not understand a word except about the star. That was natural enough. Macgregor's eyes were fixed on these children of Time. They too had followed a star. There came



"Then, close beside them, the voice. High, clear, pure as crystal, a voice that sped on invisible wings. . . . 'And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night.'

For a moment nothing. Only strange sounds and many clicks. Then, close beside them, the voice. High, clear, pure as crystal, a voice that sped on invisible wings. Over rigid lakes, rockbound coast, snow-buried forest, over the fields of ice and desolation, unspeakable it came. Out of the heavens it descended, the voice of a child, penetrating the cabin of the trapper, the

to him the vision of a Woman on an ass, a Babe at her bosom, and it seemed that between that Woman and Oomgah, between the Judæan Child and the Late Comer with his small, pinched, copper-coloured face and strands of coal-black hair, was every tie of kinship. And the arms of Mary, Mother of God, in which Divinity rested on a Galilean hill-side, they were the arms of love,

like those of Oomgah behind whose dark, low-lidded gaze moved a thousand questions that would never be answered. So, thinking of all this, he did not notice that the others, reckoning the affair to be over, had slipped away, leaving only Peeguk and his family. Presently the hunter put out a venturesome hand, and touched the box.

"It is very great magic. But may not this thing we have heard be also heard on some other day of the year?"

"On no other does it mean the same."

"Then it always comes in the bitter weather?"

"Always. Perhaps it is needed more then."

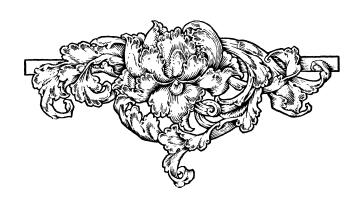
"Is it the day of the death of a great chief?"

"No," said Macgregor gently, "but of the birth of a Child."

Peeguk pulled down his black brows. "That is hard of understanding."

Oomgah looked at him. Then she drew the Late Comer closer to her breast, and began to sway with a slow rocking motion.

"Eyah, my husband," she murmured softly, "I can understand."



THE CHINESE BOWL.

(MING DYNASTY, 1368-1620 A.D.)

THE dumb Chang, long and long ago,
When earth was young, and the sun more bright,
He took the clay in his yellow hands
And fashioned me for his delight.

Chang's wife stood by on little feet,
She watched him labour hour by hour,
She plucked the twig of cherry bloom
With which he graved this lotus flow'r.

Chang's wife stood by the flaming kiln, She mocked his work, his skill denied; He plunged his knife in her yellow breast, And swiftly as a sigh she died.

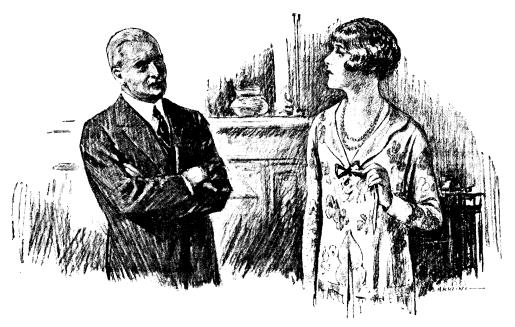
Out of his heart inscrutable

He fashioned me, and went his way;

Naught did he leave but this behind,

His Dream of Beauty, wrapped in clay.

DOROTHY DICKINSON.



"He saved your life once, you know. And now you're trying to take me away from him. Dirty work, Froggy!" On the contrary. The best service I can do that young man is to rescue him, if I can, from an improvident marriage."

A LITTLE STRATEGY

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

"E'S coming in to see you at nine o'clock," said Daphne, smiling wanly from the doorway. "Be nice to him."

"Oh, I shan't be unfriendly," her father replied coldly. "You may rely on me not to be unfriendly."

The door closed softly, and Major Getgood (retired) crossed to the study fire and kicked it into a blaze. He remained on the hearthrug propping one knee on the high morocco-padded fender, frowning thoughtfully into the glowing coals. This, he reflected, was the very devil of a business.

He was a tall, lean, leathery man of sixty, a widower, with a comfortable if by no means lavish income, a son in the Indian Army and a daughter at home. He had no great intellectual gifts, and was hampered

by certain out-of-date views and prejudices, but he was shrewd enough to make some pretence of moving with the times.

Glancing up at the little mahogany-cased clock he realised that he had only about five minutes in which to prepare himself for the interview. Young Carling, confound him! had probably been preparing for it for weeks, and might have him at a disadvantage. Yes, this was the very devil of a business!

Not that he had any particular objection to young Carling. The fellow was a Sahib, although of no particular family. But he had no particular income and no particular prospects. What did he do? He dabbled a bit in natural history and wrote a bit about it, and he was the paid secretary of the local Conservative Associa-

tion. Couldn't be getting very fat on that! Daphne was only nineteen and one of the prettiest girls for miles. Old Frognall had said so, and Frognall was a connoisseur of feminine beauty. No, young Carling was "no catch," and Daphne ought to do better. That was really all he had against Carling.

It wasn't the youngster's fault, he knew. Left school at eighteen to join the Army during the War, and came out too old to learn a profession. Did well, too—acting Major, M.C. and bar. Ought to have stayed in the Service. Still, they couldn't all stay. And now, how to deal with him?

No use flying off the handle, definitely forbidding all hope of engagement, warning him off the premises, trying to stop him from seeing Daphne, acting the Heavy Father generally. That sort of thing wasn't done nowadays. Besides, young people wouldn't stand for it. Only made 'em more stubborn and liable to go off the deep end or into the nearest registry office. One thing, Daphne couldn't marry without his consent for nearly two years. Best thing to do was to be perfectly friendly while refusing to countenance an engagement, let the young people see each other whenever they liked, and just play for time, hoping that, in the course of the next two years, one or both would change their minds. Worst of Polemarket was that it lacked fresh blood, young blood. Still, in two years, one never knew.

Polemarket was like most other small provincial towns. Most of the "set" who lived in and around the town knew one another's incomes to a penny and a great deal of one another's private affairs. The men who forgathered daily in the little grey house known locally as "The Gentlemen's Club" were for the most part elderly and had retired from one or other of the Their sons swam in different and less-stagnant waters. Thus the female of their species considerably outnumbered the male, and getting girls married to the right kind of men wasn't even as easy as it used

Major Getgood turned suddenly on hearing a knock at the door.

"Mr. Carling," said the parlour-maid.
"Show him in. . . Hullo, Carlin Hullo, Carling, how are you? Raining outside? Filthy weather! Never mind. Come and down by the fire. You'll find a cigar in that box. Been shooting to-day?"

Even while he spoke Major Getgood won-

dered if he were not overdoing the heartiness of his greeting. He had determined to be friendly although firm, but there was no sense in letting the young man start with a false impression of his intentions. So he frowned suddenly for no apparent reason, and took a chair opposite his visitor with the air of a judge taking his seat in court.

Young Carling, he was glad to see, was far from being at his ease. He was rather shy for his age. How old was he? Twentyeight, twenty-nine? Must be all that, but looked only twenty-two or twenty-three. Good type of fellow, too. Rather a pity!

Noel Carling, for his part, was far from happy, because he imagined that it would presently be his duty to announce in cold blood that he loved Daphne. It was all very well to say such things to Daphne, but very different when it came to communicating them to her cynical and leathery

"I suppose you know," he said with a slight cough, "why I wanted to see you?"

Major Getgood nodded, without quite knowing whether he ought to look genial

or grim.
"Yes," he said simply, "Daphne told

There was silence while Carling, biting into his cigar, struggled to light it. The frank, manly speech which he had prepared completely evaded his memory, like the lines of an actor suffering from stagefright.

"Well," he said jerkily, "what about

Major Getgood was nearly betrayed into saying, "What about what?" The escape was so narrow that he found himself

helping out the young man.

isn't it?"

I gather," he said, "that you want

to marry Daphne. Is that so?" "Yes, Major Getgood. And Daphne wants to marry me. I forget what I was going to say to you, but-er-it's all right,

The other started and sat up very rigid. "I don't think I quite follow you," he said. "You have come, I suppose, to ask me to countenance an engagement. And when you suggest that it's all right I take you to mean to say that I do countenance it. Now don't let's be too hurried. While I have the friendliest feelings in the world for you, you will understand thatah-hum-that I-er- Now listen here, my boy, and I'll put the case before you.

If I don't see my way at present to accede to your request, you must not think that I have anything against you. I want you and Daphne, and you and me, to continue to be friends, and I want you to be patient and wait a little while." He felt that this was rather nicely phrased, and continued: "In the first place, Daphne is too young."

"She doesn't think so."

"Probably not!"

"And I don't think so either," continued young Carling, venturing to smile.

that's two against one."

"Unfortunately, perhaps, the decision rests with me. But leave that for the moment. You were good enough to be frank with me some little while back concerning your means. And really, you know, you're not in a position to give Daphne as comfortable a home as-er-as no doubt we should both wish."

"That's true enough," admitted Carling ruefully. "But we shouldn't starve, you know. And Daphne says she doesn't mind

being hard up.'

"That, doubtless, is what she says now. But as I have previously reminded you, she's very young. I don't want her to promise herself to you or anybody until she's a little older."

Carling nodded and lowered his gaze.

"Does this mean," he asked quietly, "that you're definitely turning me down?" Here was Major Getgood's chance.

"No, my boy," he said almost cordially, "it means nothing of the sort. Parents haven't got the power to do that sort of thing nowadays. I realise that, and bow my head. You ask me to consent to an engagement, and I answer that at present I am reluctantly unable to accede to your request. But that doesn't mean I never shall. If you're both of the same mind when Daphne is twenty-one, by which time, perhaps, your prospects will have

improved—"
"You mean, you'll give your consent then?" the young man asked quickly.

"Don't try to bind me to any promises, please," said the other with a laugh which he fondly hoped might sound goodnatured. "It will, however, comfort you to reflect that I couldn't stop Daphne from marrying you then, even if I wanted Now look here, my boy, you play the game with me, and I'll play the game with you. If you'll give me your word that there shall be no talk of an engagement for another two years, you may come and go here as you please. I shan't try to stop Daphne from seeing you, and you can take her about as much as you like. All I ask is that Daphne should consider herself

free. Do you understand?"

Carling nodded. His face was very nearly expressionless. He was disappointed, but felt at the same time that things might have gone worse. Old Getgood had the whip-hand of him, but he was being perfectly sporting about it. Two years was a long time to wait, but he realised that he couldn't marry Daphne sooner without the consent of her father. Better put as good a face on the matter as possible. Major Getgood waited a moment and then held out his hand. Carling took it, thus sealing the compact.

"Well, I don't suppose you want to sit here yarning to me," remarked the elder man, who now felt that he could afford to be magnanimous. "Daphne's in the drawing-room, if you'd like to go in and

have a chat with her."

"Oh-er-thanks. I say, Major Getgood, you said I could take Daphne about sometimes? I wonder whether you'd mind my taking her to the Cricket Club Dance at Hornwood?"

"I shouldn't mind in the least, only I'm afraid you're too late, my boy. She's promised to go with Colonel Frognall."

Carling said nothing. It was a little difficult to imagine himself jealous of Colonel Frognall, a widower with a daughter older than Daphne, but just then he was in the mood to be jealous of anybody. He stammered himself slowly out of Major Getgood's presence and walked across into the drawingroom where small, frail, fairy-like Daphne awaited him.

Daphne looked up as he entered, and laughed. She had known what the result of the interview must be before it took place, and felt little like laughing; there is always something amusing in the sight of the young wooer leaving the sanctum of the stern parent of his beloved.

"Well?" she said in a low voice.

"Far from well," he retorted. "Let's see, I don't think I promised not to kiss

you, did I?"

"Quick, then! Poor old Noel, I know what he said. We're to wait until I'm twenty-one before the question of an engagement is so much as discussed. Meanwhile he hopes I shall meet somebody I like better. P'r'aps I shall!"

"Rotter-aren't you?" Carling mur-

mured. "I say, your father was quite decent about it. I will say that for him. But......"

"My dear boy, if he'd had it in his power to keep us waiting until I was fifty he'd

have done it. I know my parent."

"Well, anyhow, I suppose we shall have to wait. I say, what's all this about old Froggy taking you to that dance? Wanted to take you myself!"

She looked up at him quickly, flashing

him a smile.

"My dear, you know you can't dance and you loathe trying to dance."

"Still, all the same—"

She burst into a little shuddering laugh. "You are a mutt, aren't you? I believe you're jealous of old Froggy. He's old enough to be your father, my dear, let alone mine."

"The point is," said Carling somewhat sourly, "he doesn't realise he's quite so venerable. Behaves more as if he's my younger brother. Always trying to make love to girls. Old fool!"

"So that," said Daphne severely, "is the way you speak of your commanding officer,

the man whose life you saved!"

It was perfectly true that Carling, when a second lieutenant, had saved the life of Colonel Frognall, who was at that time his commanding officer. Carling had gone out for him into a neutral zone called No Man's Land, where he lay with a leg broken by a machine-gun bullet, and had brought him back under heavy rifle fire, and further discommoded by "five-point-nines" and "whizz-bangs," which at that time were dropping haphazardly all over the landscape. Everybody knew the story, thanks to Colonel Frognall.

"Don't remind me of past follies," said Carling. "Nobody but Froggy ever for-

gave me for it!"

Daphne laughed softly.

"Froggy's all right," she said. "He tries to flirt with everybody, but he's only in fun. And he's somehow so jolly and inoffensive with it that nobody could pos-

sibly mind."

Carling only scowled. He seemed to think that Colonel Frognall was of an age when he should have been concentrating all his attention on a better world, instead of behaving as if he were thirty years younger. Nevertheless, he liked Froggy, or would have liked him if he had not shown a disposition to hover in the neighbourhood of Daphne.

In the pause which followed there came a shrill note from the front-door bell. The maid crossed the hall and opened the door. A high lively voice without inquired for Major Getgood.

Daphne raised her brows and laughed softly

at her swain.

"Talking of angels!" she remarked.

Colonel Frognall was in the act of following the maid through to the library, but the door of the drawing-room being open, he espied Daphne and Carling. Instantly he greefed them with a mild roar and swerved to the left.

"Good evening, Daphne; hullo, Carling," he said, crossing the threshold. "Come to leave your father a book, Daphne. Simply must read it. But it'll keep. Sooner talk to you. Awful night. What's up, Car-

ling? Not well?"

Colonel Frognall was fifty-one, and his face was a red beacon of good nature and good health. He was a short, stoutly built man, brimming over with vitality, staccato in actions and words. The generous mouth under his little grey moustache was generally smiling, and his mode of address and his general manner were reminiscent of half a gale of wind.

"I'm all right, thanks," said Carling distantly. It was just like old Froggy, he reflected, to breeze in and spoil a tête-à-tête with Daphne. And there'd be no moving him either. He knew that from experience. "I was just going," he added coldly.

"Splendid!" said the Colonel, beaming.
"Then Daphne and I can have a little chat.
Don't be a young ass! I haven't butted

in, have I ? ''

"Oh no!" said Carling witheringly.

"That's all right then," said Colonel Frognall, who was nothing if not literal. "Good night then, Carling, my lad."

Carling looked at Daphne as if he expected her to intervene. For the life of her she could not have helped laughing. She could read her lover's humour and judged it best that he should go. He went with an air which suggested that only stern self-discipline prevented him from slamming doors.

"He's pipped about something," remarked the Colonel, when they were alone. "And, coming to that, you don't look too happy yourself, my dear. Anything wrong? Tell old Froggy."

"Nothing-very-wrong," she said slowly

and thoughtfully.

"Dear, dear! Bad as that?"

She laughed again in spite of herself.

"If you want to know," she said, "Noel

wants to marry me."

"The deuce he does! Well, don't take on about it. I don't suppose he means it. And, after all, you haven't got to marry him, have you?"

Daphne stamped her foot.

"But he does mean it. And—and I rather want to marry him, Froggy."

"All a delusion, m' dear. Matrimony's dashed serious. Not old enough to know your own mind yet."

"That's what father says."

"Oh, does he?" The Colonel turned a bright blue eye upon her. "Ah! And what else does father say?"

"He says we've got to wait two years before we discuss the matter any further."

"Ah! Hum! That's because he can't make you wait any longer. Sensible, too!"

"Oh, Froggy," she pouted, "I think you might be on our side!"

He smiled half seriously and shook his head.

"No reason why I should be," he said, "and every reason why I shouldn't be. You're too feather-brained for him, you know. Besides, how would you propose to live? He isn't a millionaire. Sensible man, your father. Looks a bit ahead. No money, and young enough to change your minds. Great mistake if you married."

Daphne looked at him half angrily.

"You're a cynical old beast," she said.
"Not at all. By no means. I like that boy. I'm fond of you both. Good move of your father's, making you wait two years. You won't do it, you know."

He mused for a moment, humming to himself, and Daphne saw something hard to describe bubbling and brimming in his

eyes.

"You're only a kid," he said. "You'll fall in and out of love a dozen times if you're not looked after. Why not marry an old 'un while you're about it? Somebody who could look after you. Why not marry me?"

"Oh, Froggy, don't be such a fool!"

She laughed out, expecting to hear his deep throaty laughter chime with hers. Then she met his gaze and the laughter died away on her lips.

"Well?" he asked.

"Froggy, you're not serious!"

"Suppose I am?" he said. "I could give you a pretty good time. Be a pal to you. I'm a lot younger than my years,

and I've had the experience which youth lacks. Seriously, Daphne, you might do worse."

"Oh, I dare say. A joke's a joke, but—"
"I'm not joking. Straight offer. What

do you say, Daphne?"

Certainly he looked serious enough now—as serious as she had ever seen him. The twinkle was gone out of his eyes. They regarded her calmly, appraisingly, questioningly. She stood up suddenly anxious, vaguely disappointed, all manner of troubles stirring in her mind.

"Of course," she said, "you're playing some idiotic joke. If I thought you weren't

I should be angry."

"Angry? Why? Because an old man

wants to make you happy?"

"You know I'm fond of somebody else," she retorted. "I've just told you so."

"I know you think so. Fond? Yes, perhaps. You'll outgrow it, my dear."

"He saved your life once, you know. And now you're trying to take me away from him. Dirty work, Froggy!"

"On the contrary. The best service I can do that young man is to rescue him, if I can, from an improvident marriage. That, however, isn't my only motive in asking you to become my wife."

"You've a gift for compliments," she said coldly. "I wonder what father——"

She came suddenly to a pause. A form had darkened the doorway.

"Hullo, Frognall," said Major Getgood.

"Thought I heard your voice. How are you? Just like Daphne to keep you here. Thinks that everybody who comes to the house comes to see her. Come along into the library. There's a better fire there."

Colonel Frognall faced him as if nothing of any importance had recently happened.

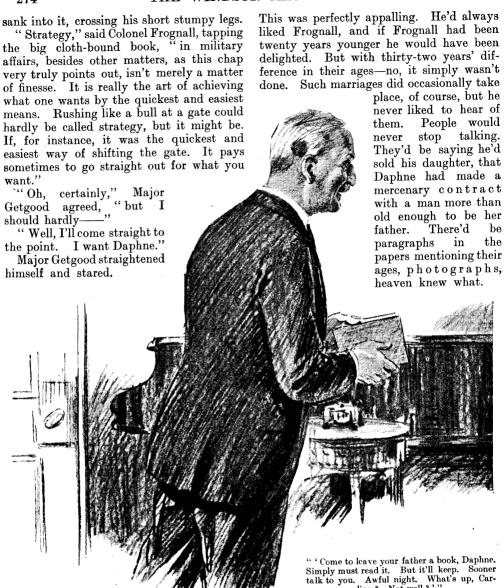
"Right-o," he said. "I say, I've brought you round that book on Strategy by that German feller. You really ought to read it. One doesn't altogether agree with every word, of course, but it's most intensely interesting."

Major Getgood laughed indulgently.

"You're great on strategy," he said.
"I always said you ought to have had your Division. Come on in and tell me about it."

The Colonel turned and smiled at Daphne. "See you later," he said, and preceded his host out and across the hall.

In the snug little library Major Getgood dragged a heavy chair closer to the fire with an air of hospitality, and his friend



"You want—what?" he demanded in a strained voice.

"Daphne. I want to marry Daphne."
There was a long pause. All Major Getgood's emotions seemed to have materialised and to be struggling in his throat.

"You're not serious," he said at last.

"Very well. You say so."

"But my dear fellow, I had hardly thought
I really don't know what to say——"

"Take your time," said the Colonel coolly. "I thought you'd be surprised."
Major Getgood began to pace the room.

"So I've come to ask your blessing," Colonel Frognall continued blandly.

ling? Not well?'"

"You haven't spoken to Daphne?"

Major Getgood asked.

"I have. I fancy I rather took her by surprise. Of course she turned me down. I expected that at first. But when she gets used to the idea——"

"I believe that she has a-er-senti-

mental regard elsewhere."

"Not engaged, is she? No? Then that doesn't trouble me. You don't seem pleased, Getgood."

The other turned sharply.

"Frankly, I'm not. Frankly, I think your proposal a most unsuitable one. If I thought there was the least chance that Daphne-"

Colonel Frognall leaned forward an inch

or two.

me," he said. "When I said that I wanted to marry Daphne I should have said that I mean to marry Daphne."

a mere formality, a matter of politeness. I'm sorry to put it as bluntly as this, but



stop it? I get what I want, you know, Getgood; it's a habit of mine. You can't send Daphne away anywhere where I can't follow. You can't stop me from seeing her, and you can't create scenes and scandals whenever I do. Asking your consent is

and get it over. Of course one wants to keep on good terms with the man who's

going to be one's father-in-law, and I hope you won't bear me any resentment, Getgood." Getgood tried to remove the frown from his forehead. Evidently the fellow was serious and not to be treated lightly. Frognall was an awkward one to cross. And Daphne—goodness knew what Daphne might do. In spite of his age, the fellow had a way with him. If she were only safely engaged to the right sort of man—

"I don't bear you any resentment," he said jerkily. "My one objection lies in the—er—in the disparity of your ages."

Colonel Frognall laughed.

"I'm not a Methuselah," he rejoined.
"I'm as fit as a man of half my age. I play cricket, tennis and squash. I never felt better or younger in my life."

Getgood made a negative gesture with

his head.

"I dare say. But the fact remains that you're within a year or two as old as I am. You've a daughter some years older than Daphne. Can't you realise how unsuitable——"

"No, I cannot," the other retorted gruffly. "One hears of plenty of such marriages, and generally they seem to turn out very well. However, it all depends on Daphne."

"If you like to put it so. And I think you will find that Daphne shares my point

of view."

"We shall see!" said Colonel Frognall,

Left to himself, Major Getgood stared moodily into the fire. This was the second would-be son-in-law he had interviewed that evening. What a nuisance girls were! He had dealt with Carling easily enough, but Daphne's elderly admirer was a tougher nut.

Colonel Frognall's proposal had mildly horrified him. He found himself vaguely afraid of the man. The fellow had too strong a personality, too much vitality. He was just the sort to get what he wanted—somehow.

If only Carling—and here he paused and lingered on the thought. It must be one or the other, it seemed, Carling or Frognall, and there was at least one way left of spiking old Frognall's guns.

* * * * *

Two days later the engagement of Noel Carling and Daphne Getgood was duly announced, and on the following morning Colonel Frognall's short legs were carrying him briskly up the High Street when he almost collided with Carling. Carling would

have passed him with the least nod of recognition, but Colonel Frognall turned and tucked the younger man's arm in his.

"No, you don't, young man," he said.
"Where are you going? You're coming into my place to be congratulated and drink a glass of wine. I'm very glad to hear it. When's it coming off?"

Within himself he thought: "She's told him, then. Trust a kid of that age. Scalps!"

"You're very kind," said Carling coldly, trying to extricate his arm, "but really—"

"Oh, that be hanged! None of that with me, young man. About your forthcoming marriage, you won't mind if my present takes the form of a cheque? Promised myself that pleasure years ago. 'Member when you were dragging me back to the trench and incidentally giving my old leg the most confounded gip? I said to myself, 'This young fellow'll be getting married one of these days, unless he stops one out here. And when he does I'll give him something to remember me by.' I don't suppose you realise it, because you don't seem grateful, but you've to thank me for the present happy state of affairs."

"I don't think I understand you,"

Carling said.

"I don't suppose you do. I always knew how things were between you and Daphne, but I was afraid old Getgood would put in his spoke. So he did, apparently. After you'd gone the other night Daphne told me just what had happened. No engagement for two years and all that. So I thought the time had come for the use of a little strategy, and I proposed to her myself."

"I know you did," said Carling, forgetting

himself.

"Ah! And then of course I went and saw old Getgood. Told him I was going to marry Daphne and no nonsense about it. Frightened him! Most unsuitable—disparity in our ages and all that. Gave him something to think about. Came to the conclusion that the only way to save her from me was to hand her over to you. Rather awkward if Daphne had said Yes to me and he'd given his blessing! Not much chance of that though. I'm young enough to like pretty girls at a distance, but I'm too old a bird for that sort of chaft"

Carling stared at him, suddenly smiling, and uttered a faint gasp.

"I say! Do you really mean to say that

"Of course I did!" Laughter played hide-and-seek in the bright blue eyes. "Tell old Getgood when I see him. Dare say he'll forgive me in time. Now say you're sorry, you young dog, for thinking I was trying to snaffle Daphne."

By this time they had reached Colonel Frognall's gate, and paused a moment. Carling, half laughing, began to try to stammer something. Colonel Frognall jerked his arm.

"Well, never mind about being sorry," he said. "Come on in and have that glass of wine. One good turn, et cetera. You'll have to learn to wrestle with that green-eyed monster, my lad. Hope old Getgood won't cut up too rough with me. Wonder how he enjoyed that book on Strategy!"



SUPPLICATION.

ENRICH me with the treasured things
Of rain and sun and dew,
And let the west wind on his wings
Bear wonders ever new;
Fulfil me with the fairy gold
Whose mines lie dark and deep,
Beyond the Phantom Shepherd's fold
Who opes the doors of sleep.

Pour out upon me all the drops
Of blue and liquid fire,
The jewel-dreams that lie in heaps
In caskets of desire;
Encircle me with necklets dim
Of pearls beyond all price,
Far-gathered at the twilight's rim
In seas of Paradise.

Undo for me each heavy bale,
With silken cordage bound,
Of silver ingots pure and pale,
In royal raiment wound;
And let a music deep and low,
As from a shell, be flung,
With melodies of long ago,
Songs when the world was young.

Then, I being wealthy passing all
That princely pomp may wear,
Poverty's tattered cloak let fall
Around my shoulders bare;
And while my hand impatient strips
Each earthly gaud away,
These poor terrestrial gleams eclipse
With Thine authentic Day!

MAY BYRON.

ARISTIDE

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

RISTIDE was probably the smallest goldfish that ever lived, which was perhaps as well, seeing that he lived in perhaps the smallest round glass bowl that ever was made, except for the other five which flanked it among the prizes displayed within the booth of the "Loterie des Familles." Aristide at least was incontestably the smallest of the six brothers in misfortune.

The Family Lottery was quite an ancient institution of the Fair of Versailles. Old Madame Carrouet, who directed its fortunes, had followed the road for fifty years at least, which is to say that she had spent twice as many weeks on her pitch at the lower end of the Avenue de Saint Cloud near the Place d'Armes. The "poissons avec boule" were an innovation among the prizes she offered, which shows you that for all her seventy years she knew how to move with the times.

Aristide and his bowl were among the most desirable of the prizes to be won in the Family Lottery. You might win him, if you were very lucky indeed, by venturing your five sous upon the number inscribed on the big round wheel corresponding to that with which the bowl was ticketed. was the boast of Madame Carrouet that every adventurer gained a prize, which was true, though it was also true that the vast majority of the prizes were infinitesimal pieces of nougat or doll's tea-cups or paper caps and neckties, and that their numbers turned up proportionately very much more often than the strict law of averages might have suggested. But that chance—or Mère Carrouet—did occasionally make exceptions was proved by the undoubted fact that Aristide and his bowl were won, on the very day the Fair was opened and at his very first attempt, by a little soldier from the Camp of Satory, a little soldier of the Nièvre who had joined the 227th regiment of infantry only three days before and was feeling very lonely in his novel surroundings.

"Tiens—c'est rigolo," said one of the two comrades with whom he had already struck up an acquaintance. "And what are you going to do with it?"

Soldat Lucien would very much have liked to take it back to camp with him, but he was not at all sure that he would be allowed to keep it there, and too much ashamed of his own ignorance to ask. So he only answered, "I shall call him Aristide, because his face is just like that of my cousin of the Farm of the Quatre-Vents," and then he made some excuse for leaving his comrades and betook himself towards the Rue de Vieux-Versailles, holding the bowl very carefully so that the water should not slop over.

The slum is of course the hall-mark of civilization, and as Versailles is a very civilized city—though not a very big one as cities go nowadays—it naturally has its congested districts also. You must look for it around the street that was once the main thoroughfare of the tiny village, under the hill on which the Sun King later erected his monstrous pleasure-house, in a quarter never visited by tourists; and in some of the alleys and courtyards that comprise it you will find poverty just as bitter as anywhere in the slums of Paris itself.

Half-way along the Street of Old Versailles is the Café of the Two Bold Hussars, and it was thither that Soldat Lucien betook himself, carrying Aristide in his bowl. The Café of the Two Bold Hussars had been known to him by hearsay even before he was called away from the "pays" to do his military service; for Madame Laroque, the patronne, was herself of the "pays," coming from the village of Disdon-le-Potier, within two miles of Lucien's birthplace, and she had always a welcome for sons of the Nivernais; and within twenty-four hours of his arrival in camp Soldat Lucien, feeling his very loneliest, had visited the Two Bold Hussars and been mothered and made much of, and now that he had won Aristide he made up his mind at once to offer him upon the altar of gratitude.

As it proved, Aristide was destined never to grace the comptoir of the Café of the Two Bold Hussars, for just as Soldat Lucien turned the corner from the Rue de Satory, Fate intervened. Fate took the form of a little girl with a very dirty face. She was dressed in the shabbiest of little black frocks and boots, and she was crying very bitterly. At her feet were the shattered remains of a wine-bottle, its former contents staining the curbstone and trickling into the gutter.

Soldat Lucien, like all Frenchmen of

to produce the one franc and six sous which was the price of the broken bottle. But as it unfortunately happened he had spent all his available money at the Family Lottery and the other attractions of the Foire, and a careful search of the pockets of his pale-blue overcoat revealed no more than forty-five centimes. These, however, he thrust upon the child; and as a happy after-thought, forgetting his debt of gratitude to Madame Laroque, taking one of her small and grubby hands, he placed in it the string which supported Aristide's



"There,' he said. 'That is for you, and you are not to cry any more. His name is Aristide,' he added as an after-thought. 'And you must change the water every day that he may live.'"

whatever age, was very fond of children. At the sight of such distress he stopped and, bending down, inquired into the tragedy. "She will destroy me! Oh, she will massacre me!" was all the little girl could answer through her tears at first; but regaining composure in the presence of a friendly face, she found strength to explain that she had been sent to fetch a bottle of "pinard" for her aunt, and that she had dropped it, and now had nothing but massacre to look forward to.

Soldat Lucien was impulsive, as a good soldier should be, and his first impulse was dwelling-place and carefully closed the podgy fingers over it. "There," he said. "That is for you, and you are not to cry any more. His name is Aristide," he added as an after-thought. "And you must change the water every day that he may live. And you should feed him——" He hesitated. "Feed him on crumb of bread and—and little flies." Then, without waiting for thanks or protests, he straightened himself up, pressed the creases out of the blue overcoat, and returned to the Camp of Satory, where, we may hope, he eventually made a very good soldier.

The little girl, whose name was Jeanne-Marie, was at first delighted with her new possession and afterwards perturbed. If you live with an aunt who is not at all kind to you and who drinks more than is good for her, and if she has sent you to fetch her a bottle of wine and you return with a goldfish in a bowl instead, you have indeed some cause for perturbation. So Jeanne-Marie, who in experience was thirty, even if in years she was only nine, donned her considering cap, even while she regarded the beauties of Aristide. He really was very beautiful, especially to anyone who had never seen anything like him before, for, although he was no bigger than a stickleback, he was very beautifully coloured. He was orange-gold in places and goldenbrown in others, and he had little black pin-points of eyes and a waving tail that was rather too big for him, and he swam to and fro in the little glass bowl with increasing activity that Jeanne-Marie took as a sign that he was very happy indeed, though it may have been only that he was a little alarmed about his future.

Jeanne-Marie, having dried her tears, made up her mind. She walked a few yards up the street, holding Aristide very carefully, until she came to a narrow alley under one of the big houses that once belonged to great noblemen but were long since degenerated into rabbit-warrens for the very poor. The alley led into a big courtyard, with an arch at the further end, beyond which was another courtyard where once the nobleman's horses had lived, very much more luxuriously than their human successors lived now. Jeanne-Marie's aunt lived above the inner courtyard, at the top of five flights of stairs, but Jeanne-Marie was in no hurry to return to her. Instead, she turned through a little door in the first courtyard and along a dirty passage and down a flight of stone steps into a cellar. It was quite a small cellar that must at some time have been partitioned off from one very much larger, and, save for a few old crates and boxes, it had been disused ever since Jeanne-Marie could remember, and there was not even a key to the heavy door by which it had once been closed.

Because no one else ever seemed to use the cellar, Jeanne-Marie had little by little come to regard it as her own, and although it was rather dark and gloomy to play in, being lighted only by one dusty skylight, it had the unique charm of being a safe refuge

from her aunt even in the most stringent need. So, again, in one of the dusty packing-cases she had established a depot of any such contraband articles as might be in danger of confiscation at her unamiable relative's hands. To this place of security she had decided to commit Aristide until at least the immediate trouble should be over.

She had just placed her treasure with infinite precautions on the floor of the packing-case when her quick ears caught the sound of shuffling footsteps on the stairs. Evidently someone was coming down to the cellar, a portent thitherto unknown in Jeanne-Marie's experience. Sudden panic seized her. Against all the probabilities, for Aunt Rose-Christine was not only enormously stout but had a rooted objection to any form of exercise, Jeanne-Marie felt convinced that she had somehow tracked her laggard niece and was come in search of her with punitory intent. It was already dusk in the upper world and almost dark in the cellar: there was just the one chance of escape. She crept into the packingcase, taking all due precautions not to disturb Aristide, and crouched there, her heart in her mouth, awaiting the decree of Destiny.

It was not Aunt Rose-Christine at all. whispering of men's voices reassured her as to that, emboldened her even to peep out cautiously through one of the cracks in the packing-case to see what they were about. It was at first too dark for her to distinguish their faces, but suddenly an electric torch flashed out and she could distinguish that the leader was one Jean Volant, better known as Jean the Cutter, an inhabitant of the inner courtyard, well-known to the Versailles police as a dangerous ne'er-do-well and suspected of having taken a hand in a whole series of burglaries which had terrified the good citizens of the aristocratic suburb of Le Chesnay in the preceding winter. His companion, although, judging by externals, a man of similar type, was unknown to Jeanne-Marie. They were carrying between them, with considerable difficulty, two long rolls of what looked like carpeting, which they set down upon the floor of the cellar with grunts of relief. No sooner had they done so than the Cutter switched off his flashlamp, and they stood for a moment as if listening.

"All safe," said the Cutter at last. "And the rest will be easy enough."

"Sure they'll be safe here?" asked his companion doubtfully. "Seem a good many people about." "None of them ever come down here," his friend reassured him. "Used to belong to Grivelle, the wine-seller at the corner, but since he was sold up it doesn't belong to anyone in particular. As to that, supposing they did come, what would they see except a couple of old pieces of sacking? Tiens, Bobo, I didn't think you were such a faint-heart. Besides—shan't I be about all the time, and if anyone did find them——"He laughed cruelly. "What do I carry a toothpick for?"

"There isn't even a lock on the door,"

grumbled Bobo.

"All the better. If you were to lock the door—my faith—that would be to set tongues wagging indeed. No, my ancient, you can leave it to me. It is not the first time I have managed little affairs like this. And now—it is time you got back to old Mealyface. Tell him the job's done and he is to have the cart here at six to-morrow morning—just before it gets light. And he is to bring my share of what's coming along with him or the bargain's off. Convenu?"

The light flashed again for a moment as they groped for the bottom stair, and Jeanne-Marie was left alone.

Once reassured that it was not her terrible aunt, she had taken little further interest in what had passed. Her mind was indeed filled with matters more serious than a conversation which suggested nothing to her. Aristide, she reflected, might be—like herself—afraid of being left alone in the dark, and—and there was Cousin Baudoin.

Cousin Baudoin was a cousin only by the elastic laws which govern French family life, being indeed the stepson of her greataunt Jules who had died ever so many years ago, but Jeanne-Marie was as fond of him -and very much more proud-as if he had been her own elder brother. For one thing, he and Tante Rose-Christine hated each other as only members of the same family can hate, in France or elsewhere which was in itself a bond of union; and for another, he was a public character, wearing a uniform as smart as any soldier and very much more prominent in the public eye. He was, in other words, an agent of the Versailles Municipal Police Force, and could be seen daily with a little white bâton directing the motor-traffic at the corner of the Avenue de Paris and the Rue Georges-Clemenceau. He was quite young really—though Jeanne-Marie thought him immensely old and infinitely wise—and he had a smart moustache and ambitions—and altogether he was such a cousin as anyone might have been proud of. Why she had not thought of him before Jeanne-Marie could not conceive, unless it were that the acquisition of Aristide, following hard upon the tragedy of the wine-bottle, had together monopolised her mind to the exclusion of all else.

The idea once come to her, Jeanne-Marie did not hesitate a moment. Only she leant down in the darkness and whispered to the invisible Aristide: "Do not be afraid if I leave you for a little, little cabbage. Soon I will return, and you shall have a home of the most wonderful."

Cousin Baudoin was, by the best of luck, not only at his post, but on the point of being relieved. He listened sympathetically to Jeanne-Marie's story, very readily produced the sixty sous necessary to replace the wine—which alone shows you, if you know how much—or little—is the salary of a French policeman, that he was the soul of generosity—and readily offered to take charge of Aristide until better arrangements could be made for him.

"And will you take him at once?" asked Jeanne-Marie, intent on making the most of her opportunity. "I am so afraid he might be frightened, being left there all alone in the dark. And if Jean the Cutter were to come back—"

Cousin Baudoin did not hear her last words, for he was gazing reflectively up at the clock on the Hôtel de Ville tower. "Yes, I have ten minutes," he told her, smiling. "Just time to pick up M. Aristide and leave him at my room." He did not add that his chief object in accompanying her was to be on hand in case Aunt Rose-Christine should take it into her head to proceed from words to blows in the matter of the delayed bottle of "pinard," his official character as agent municipal having a deterrent effect when he was known to be in the neighbourhood.

Everything in the cellar was as Jeanne-Marie had left it, and, by the light of Cousin Baudoin's lamp, Aristide was quickly retrieved from his loneliness. But in the few moments during which his cousin was within her treasure-house the agent's professional eye had not been idle. "What is this?" he asked, directing the light toward-the two rolls of carpet lying on the ground.

"It is something that Jean the Cutter left here not half an hour ago," explained

Jeanne-Marie. "He and another man whom I do not know."

"Jean the Cutter!" exclaimed the agent with sudden eagerness. "He left it here?"

In his excitement he almost threw himself upon the nearer roll, cutting the twine which bound it together and almost falling over it as he did so. No sooner had he unrolled the coarse outer cover of burlap tered Cousin Baudoin in an awed voice. And then, rousing himself: "Little Cousin—you know the Central Commissariat—in the Hôtel de Ville. Run there as fast as you can, without losing a moment. Say that you come from me and that the affair is of the most urgent. Insist that you be taken at once to M. le Commissaire, and when you see him tell him that it is in



"On the floor in the pitch darkness two men were rolling over and over each other in a death struggle; and as one of them had a knife and the other was unarmed . . .

than he gave a startled cry, and starting back, keeping his light still turned upon it, collapsed upon a packing-case which fortunately stood close behind him.

"What is it, Cousin Baudoin?" inquired Jeanne-Marie, startled by his excitement, but a little annoyed at his obvious lack of interest in Aristide.

"It is it is fifty thousand francs," mut-

the matter of the tapestries stolen three days ago from the Palace. Beg that he come here or send at once, for there is also every chance that the thieves may be captured as well. Hurry now, hurry. I meanwhile will wait here in case the thieves should change their minds and return before we expect them."

Jeanne-Marie could run very fast for a little girl of nine, and in less than five minutes

she had reached the police station; and because she was known as the little cousin of the agent Baudoin, in less than another three she was telling her story to M. the Chief Commissary; and in less than another five he and three of his men had reached the Rue de Vieux-Versailles, and were following Jeanne-Marie down into the cellar where

heap of limbs had been unravelled, the man with the knife proved to be none other than Jean Volant (dit l'Egorgeur) himself, who, perhaps impressed by his friend Bobo's pessimism, had paid the cellar a visit to see that his purloined treasures were still safe, and had there found the agent Baudoin awaiting him.



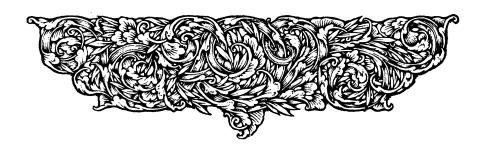
. . . it was a very lucky thing that Jeanne-Marie had run so fast and that M. le Commissaire had responded so promptly to the message she carried."

Aristide still awaited his fate, though no longer in solitude. Very much the contrary indeed, for on the floor in the pitch darkness two men were rolling over and over each other in a death struggle; and as one of them had a knife and the other was unarmed, it was a very lucky thing that Jeanne-Marie had run so fast and that M. le Commissaire had responded so promptly to the message she carried. For when the tangled

Now if such foolish and unimaginative persons there be as have a contempt for goldfish and regard them as inconsiderable in the matter of influencing history, let them consider the case of Aristide. (It is true that he was no ordinary fish, but something approaching a hero in his contempt for danger, for when Jeanne-Marie at last found leisure to attend to him she found

him swimming round and round his glass home as calmly as if it were the bottom of the sea.) Let them consider, in fact, that he affected the destinies not only of individuals, but the very policies of the Government of the French Republic. Save for the existence of Aristide it would never have been discovered who had stolen the famous tapestries from the Palace of Versailles, and it would never have been made clear that MM. Bobo and the Cutter had effected an entrance with no more trouble than the opening of a window-catch with an ordinary pocket-knife, and the Government would never have decided that, despite hard times and shortness of cash, it was absolutely necessary to introduce modern methods of repelling burglars and to increase the number of night-watchmen lest all the Palace treasures disappear one by one. Again, had Aristide never existed, Jeanne-Marie would certainly have gone on being beaten by her cruel aunt, whereas, as the owner of so handsome a sum as fifty thousand francs—for Cousin Baudoin would not touch a sou of the reward—administered for her by the local Committee of the Union of the Ladies of France—Aunt Rose-Christine dared not lay a finger on her or even nag her in tones above a whisper. Save for Aristide the agent Baudoin would never have gained such rapid promotion nor already be able to aspire, not unreasonably, to the highest positions of his profession. Nor, finally, save for Aristide might it ever have come about Jeanne-Marie may very likely become in due course the wife of Sergeant Baudoin—unless, as is of course possible, seeing that he is at once an amiable and a rising young man, someone else annexes him beforehand.

As for Aristide himself, he accepted his destiny with the calmness of a true philosopher, swam an innumerable number of times round his glass home, and died, universally regretted, of a surfeit of ants' eggs in the third month of his fame.



BEAUTY.

A PPLE-BLOSSOM prest
Against a blackbird's breast. . . .

Towers built by men Crumbling back again. . . .

The moon ages old Carved of burning gold. . . .

Flocks of coloured birds, Music, jewels, words. . . .

And one whom lacking, I
Had passed all Beauty by.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.



"You'd better stay here a bit until I've told her.' Then she knocked and entered."

THE LAMP

By DOROTHY ROGERS

Author of "The Stand-by" and "If To-day be Sweet"

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON

OB DICKS trod the dusky but familiar lane with wellnigh reverent attention to every detail of the way. Three of the great elms had gone from the double rank of the long dark avenue, but otherwise nothing was changed; even the tottering notice-board beside the stile into Farmer Banks' meadow still raised its half-obliterated warning—"Private Path"—to disregarding trespassers. In eight years that, too, might well have fallen like the elms. Eight years since last he walked that lane (the thought went with him every step of the way), and then he had been going in the opposite direction. Then King's Bosbury lay behind and France ahead—France in June, nineteen-eighteen. Now it was King's Bosbury that lay ahead, a couple of miles away, and France behind-France

and Germany—and between that last memory of the lane and this stretched those eight years of which he had no reckoning.

It was a big piece out of a man's life, he reflected as he trudged along. He hadn't realised before how big it was. It made a man feel queer, as if he had died and come to life again. Queer! And now here he was again, in the very month of his departure, walking from the junction four country miles away to the quiet village strewn along the valley under yonder hill. And as he walked he began to ask himself why he had returned. It was his native place, of course; there was something in that, perhaps all in that, for he had no nearer relations there than the uncle and aunt who had reared him like an odd chick

among their own large brood. The brood had flown now, he knew; marriage and the war had scattered it before nineteeneighteen. Only the old people were left. They would be surprised to see him back; no doubt they thought him dead. In their own dry way they might give him welcome; but after the first shock his aunt, who was something of a shrew, would think more of the muddiness of his boots than the tale of his return, and his uncle's chief interest would be in the state of the crops where he had come from.

There was Willy, though—his pal, Willy Parton. He would be glad, aye, and old Mrs. Parton, who had been more of a mother to him than ever his own aunt had known how to be. She would cry, bless her heart, and wipe her eyes on her apron, but Willy would roar and slap his shoulder and roar again his boisterous welcome.

And there was Mary Greening. . . . and Willy would be married by now. A sudden pain wrung him. Queer how that old place still hurt! Oh, well, what more likely than that two such pals as he and Willy should both love the same girl? She had chosen well in choosing Willy, and wisely, too, as it had turned out! What if she had been his own wife, and he awayas good as dead—all these years? A nice thing it would have been for her! Bob Dicks' thoughts trudged as slowly and patiently as his feet, your true countryman's way of brain and limbs, accustomed to good heavy soil and slow locomotion. broad back and rumpled fair head were bent, his grey eyes fixed less and less, as thought deepened, upon the things around him, and more and more on the muddy ground he trod. In one hand he carried his cap, for the evening was steamy hot after rain; in the other he gripped a most incongruous wicker case that seemed to belong to neither the size nor the sex of its possessor.

"A nice thing it would have been for

He repeated the thought, this time mumbling it aloud; then, conscious of his own voice, he looked up and immediately stood still, planted rigidly in his tracks. before him in the summer twilight, her brown eyes dilated, her pretty lips apart, stood Mary herself.

"Bob!" she murmured. "Bob!" then looked so like to faint that he dropped the case forthwith and stretched out an arm

to steady her.

"Why, Mary!" he said, and stood tonguetied and awkward.

This was too sudden a thing to take in all at once, and so he stood, staring hungrily down on her. There was, as of old, the scent of a flowering grass-meadow about her. He never used to smell a ripe grass-crop without thinking of Mary. But she was pale and trembled a little.

"Why, Mary!" he repeated.

Seeing her distress and with some confused notion that it would help her if he talked, he went on speaking, slowly, wonderingly.

"It's funny, meeting you like this. I was just thinkin' about you. After all this time . . . the first person I see from home!"

He smiled, a slow, diffident smile that the girl remembered well. That and the sound of his deep, quiet tones restored her from something very akin to superstitious panic. The warm grip of his arm, felt through the flimsy material of her blouse, completed her reassurance. Only flesh and blood could feel like that.

"We thought you were dead," she said. "Why, Bob, wherever have you been, and why did you never write a line to anybody

to say you was alive?"

Where had he been? That was the trouble. He himself knew only by hearsay, hearsay of his own rambling, broken talk, repeated to him once again by strangers who knew him well! He raised one hand. rumpling up his hair distractedly, then slowly put on his cap.

"It's hard to tell exackly where I have been," he replied gravely. "You see, Mary,

I don't rightly know myself!"

"You don't know? Why, Bob, it's eight

years!..."

Each eyed the other doubtfully, the girl scarcely able to credit what he said, the man mistrusting his ability to explain that which had befallen him. very sight of her, too, hindered clarity of thought. Those wide-set brown eyes, the dark hair, that straight-grown, healthy loveliness of form, all smote upon the old wound and increased the dull throb of a long-remembered ache.

"Bob, what d'you mean—you 'don't know'?"

He stooped to pick up the case, a foreignlooking, shoddy thing, ornately leatherbound. The girl stepped beside him, and together they walked on between the darkening hedgerows.

"Well, you see, Mary, it's this way," he began awkwardly. "When I went back in nineteen-eighteen—about this time o' year it wur, you remember?" She nodded. "I hadn't been out above a month before I got hit. I must have been hit because there's the scar yet on my head, but all I recollect is a great crash—seemed as if all the whole world had blowed up like, and then—it sounds ridicklous, but I can't remember no more until a fortnight or so back."

He looked at her sheepishly, as though doubtful of her belief.

Mary's eyes widened in amazement.

"A fortnight or so back!" she echoed. "Why, Bob, wherever were you all that long time?"

He shook his head.

"I dunno," he replied. "They say I must have been picked up by the Germans and been all wrong in the head or something. I dunno. Anyway, they say when I walked into La Chapelle, a bit above two year ago, I was like a skeleton, and all in rags, and didn't know who I was nor where I come from. They knew I was British and they looked after me—"

"Who were 'they'?" Mary demanded. "Old Pierre Lebas and his wife. They worked on a farm-not much like one of the farms about here"—(he ran his eye appreciatively over the hedgerows to the sleeping fields beyond), "but they got me a job there. The funny part is, Mary, that I worked two years on that farm and I'm blest if I can remember a day of it! I lived with old Pierre and Marie. only boy had gone in the war. She was a hard little stick, was Marie, but she'd got a heart. She made me save my money—kep' it for me in the straw mattress on my bed. She showed it me when I come right in my head. She didn't believe in banks, Marie didn't. Then, just about a fortnight ago I was up her walnut tree, so she says, a-sawing off a bough that had broke, when all of a sudden I slipped and fell. I came down an awful crash. She thought I was killed, and come running out screeching. this is the queer part of it, Mary: that screeching is the first thing I can recklect! When I sat up, all dizzy, I saw a withered old woman runnin' towards me, and I stared at her silly-like, not thinking I'd ever seen her before, and she got in an awful wax before she understood that something funny had happened to me. It was the doctor that told her, and me, too. He could talk English a bit, and it was he who told me the things I'd told them before I come to, like. I couldn't rightly get the hang of it all myself, but he and Marie and Pierre sort of patched things together, and he fixed it all up for me to come back to England. It's a queer thing, Mary, but all that time I'd learnt a lot of their lingo (I haven't forgotten that now, like the rest), but I couldn't tell them so much as my name; yet the minute I come to, as you might say, I thought of the old Kissing Stile Walk at home, and you—"

His tongue came to an abrupt halt and he looked at her uncomfortably out of the tail of his eye, his face suddenly redder.

"I know, I remember," said the girl softly into the silence. But after that the silence grew, and the beat of their footsteps rendered it so oppressively intimate that Bob Dicks scarcely knew how to tread, far less how to break that stillness by further speech. Suddenly, to his relief, he espied, ahead in the gathering dusk, a twinkling light.

"Why, that must be Mrs. Parton's cottage.

We've come quicker than I thought."

With that the old wound gave another throb. He swallowed hard and mightily prepared for speech.

"I reckon you and Willy are old married folk by now," he said in a tone that sounded quite satisfactorily light and off-hand.

The girl stood still.

"So you don't know? Oh, of course, you wouldn't! Even that would all come after you was hit!"

"What would? What d'you mean?"

He, too, halted, the lightness gone from his tone. In the thickening dusk and under the shadowy trees it was not easy to see her face; what was more, she kept it turned towards the far-twinkling light as she answered slowly:

"Willy was killed two days after you

was reported missing."

"Mary, you don't mean that? Not Willy?" he demanded incredulously.

She nodded.

The shock of this confused his brain. He became too fully occupied with trying to imagine Willy gone, his pal dead, to take in any further considerations. His troubled eyes followed hers to that wavering spark; after a while it switched his mind into a new channel.

"Poor old Mother Parton!" he said.
"Poor old soul. He was all she had,
the very light of her eyes——" His own

becoming dim, he broke off abruptly to ask

question: "She—she's borne it all right, has she? She's still there?"

Looking anxiously at the girl, he dis-

that lamp? She puts it in her window at sundown every evening, and it's going all night until the morning. She says it'll light him home along the lane and let him know she's waiting. Oh, Bob, for



covered that she was quietly weeping. "Yes," she murmured unsteadily, "she's still there, but it's broken her. It's touched her brain. She can't believe he's gone. She knows he'll come back, and she's always talking about him. She's even got everything ready against he comes. You see

eight years it's been there! It's cruel!" She sobbed outright, and he put an arm gently round her. It was wonderful to feel her shoulders in the curve of his arm. It had never happened before that night, though he had sometimes tried to imagine it. But Bob Dicks' brain was accustomed to ploughing one furrow of thought at a time. It confused and worried him now to be trying to turn over so many: Willy's death—poor Willy!—and Mary weeping in his arm, and Mrs. Parton, and that light,

"Yes, go, Bob. Next to Willy she thought the most of you. You just go in; it couldn't do no harm."

"But you'll come too, Mary, won't you?" he asked quickly, seized by sudden uneasiness.



"" Willy,' she said, 'I've kep' that lamp a-burning every night now for—I've lest count how long, but it don't matter. I knew it 'ud bring you in the end!' There was triumph in the cracked voice."

that light twinkling faith and hope for eight years along the lane.

"Maybe I'd better go in and see her," he said. "Maybe she'd like to see me."

The girl dried her eyes.

"Well, yes, perhaps I'd better. She's used to me. I run in near every day. You see, she still thinks I'm—I mean, she thinks we're both waiting."

He nodded heavily.

They walked on in silence and came to a little gate set in a low round-topped hedge of box. Over the hedge there came a pungent smell of wood-smoke, mingled with sweet-briar and the fragrance of pinks that made a glimmering white border to the narrow path leading to the porch. At the gate a thought struck him.

"Maybe you've took up with someone else?" he asked, looking at the girl.

He saw her shake her head, and they went in silently, she a little in advance because there was not room for both side by side on the narrow, flower-bordered path. He had to bend his head under the frail wooden porch because the thick stems of a rambler rose that smothered it caught his hair. The girl half turned and whispered:

"You'd better stay here a bit until I've

told her."

Then she knocked and entered.

"Mummy Parton," she said, "it's only me—Mary."

A light, cracked voice came to Bob's ear—a well-known voice, but older and more cracked.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Mary? I didn't know. I thought it might 'a bin—well, well, I didn't know."

The voice fell to a disappointed croon, and through the crack of the door he saw her, a small, shrivelled woman huddled in a chair by the embers of a fire, her white hair falling wispily back to a tiny knob behind, her hands wandering a little vaguely over her apron as her eyes, tearwashed eyes but very blue, as vaguely wandered about the room.

"I've brought someone to see you, Mummy," the girl began hesitatingly. "Someone as you used to be fond of——"

Still peeping through the crack, he saw the old woman rise quickly to her feet, her eyes suddenly fixed, a quick flush in her thin, wrinkled cheeks; and, also, he saw Mary's hand go up to her face, startled.

"No, no," she said hastily, "not—not

him. Someone else——"

"You don't deceive me, girl! It's him. I know it is. I knew he'd come to-night.

Willy, my boy, where are you?"

With surprising activity she brushed aside the girl who would have detained her, and, scurrying to the door, flung it wide, and revealed Bob, standing lintel-high, very flushed and troubled, desperately gripping his case. For a moment Mrs. Parton peered out at him; then, with a broken sob of laughter, she flung herself upon him, her hands clutching at his coat, her head upon his breast.

"I allers knew you'd come!" she crooned.
"They told me you wouldn't—they said you was gone—but I allers knew. It was

no good telling me!"

Over the white, wispy hair Bob Dicks' eyes desperately sought the girl's. Bewildered, her hand to her mouth, she shook her head. The situation was beyond her. Dropping the case and his cap, he took the old woman gently in his arms. She was crying a little now, quite happily, and her fingers had ceased to clutch, and only clung tightly to his coat.

"Mummy! Mummy Parton!" he said, and his voice thrilled the girl by its deep softness. "It isn't Willy—this time. Not to-night. It's only Bob Dicks. You remember Bob Dicks—don't you?—as you was always so good to. Look up and see."

The little old face lifted. Tears still trickled down the wrinkled cheeks, but the blue eyes regarded him steadily; there was knowing laughter in them as well as tears, and a smile on her tremulous lips.

"Willy! Willy! You allers would have your little joke!" she said. "But you don't take me in—no, not likely!" She made a soft sound of mirthful scorn. Her hands tugged at his coat, pulling him indoors. "Come in, come in!" she exclaimed impatiently. "Oh, Willy, you have kep' your old mother waiting a terrible long time!"

He was in the cottage now, still holding her in his arms, staring mutely and miserably over her head at Mary. The girl came forward.

"But, Mummy, it isn't Willy. Can't you see? It's Bob. Bob Dicks, Willy's pal. Don't you remember Bob?"

The little old woman from her sheltered resting-place turned a scornful gaze on the

"D'you think I don't know my own boy from Bob Dicks?" she demanded. "And Bob's dead, poor chap. I allers loved that lad a'most as if he was my own. But I'm surprised at you, Mary. You ought to know the differ, you as was pledged to Willy! But you ain't a mother, anyway. D'you think a mother wouldn't know her son in the dark and blindfolded?"

Once more she looked up into the brown, troubled face above her own.

"Willy," she said, "I've kep' that lamp a-burning every night now for—I've lost count how long, but it don't matter. I knew it 'ud bring you in the end!" There was triumph in the cracked voice. "And yer bed's all ready for you, and there's your slippers standing in the corner yonder. Now didn't I know you'd come?"

Bob Dicks made no answer. He put his head down quickly, hiding it in her white hair, and immediately two hands lovingly tried to enfold it, patting and gently smoothing his rough shock. When he looked up again, a little ashamed of his misty eyes, the girl had gone. Mrs. Parton, alert to his least movement, saw him stare blankly round the room, cast a quick glance round her and chuckled. Disengaging herself from his arms, she pushed him towards the door.

"Go and see her to the gate then! You sweethearts! Well, well, I was just the same, and she's a good girl, a good girl."

Suddenly she scurried back, clutching him almost frantically. Some deep fear had roused within her.

"But you'll come back? You'll come back? Willy, you won't be long—will you?—comin' back!"

Looking down into her anxious eyes, Bob Dicks knew that there was only one thing to say.

"Î'll come back. I won't be long," he

promised.

Outside in the sweet-scented dusk he found Mary weeping into her hands by the gate. He stood before her helpless, his arms hanging.

"Mary, whatever are we to do?" he

wanted to know.

She shook her head, being unable to

speak.

Bob Dicks stared down at her, his brows puckered. This was a queer home-coming, to be sure, for one who, rightly speaking, had no home to come to. He turned and looked back at the cottage. In the small window shone the lamp; behind it he could see a little figure fluttering to and fro.

Mary dried her eyes, sighed, and spoke.
"Bob," she said, "do you know the

only thing as I can see for you to do?"

His head moved slowly in negation.

"Once she gets an idea in her mind it's terrible hard to get it out again. Now that she thinks as you're Willy come back home, you aren't goin' to make her believe you are Bob. You can see that for yourself. You'd only break her heart by trying."

"For sure," he responded sadly. Mary laid her hand on his arm.

"Well," she went on softly, "you've got no home of your own and no folk of your own worth countin'." (Mary spoke scornfully, knowing his aunt.) "Here's a home all ready for you and a poor old woman expecting you. Can't you be Willy, for her sake?"

He stared at her, dazed; then slowly a thought turned up.

"But that'd be a kind of lying, wouldn't

it, Mary?"

"And what's a little lie matter, I'd like to know, compared with Mummy Parton's happiness?" she demanded defiantly, warming to her own scheme. "And, Bob, there's another thing. She's getting very old; don't you think Willy'd be glad if he knew you was there to look after her?"

There was something of guile in her words. This man, so big, so homelessly adrift—didn't he want looking after as much as Mummy Parton, and more? She withdrew her hand from his sleeve.

He turned again towards the cottage. The door that he had pulled to behind him was open now, and within the lamp-lit space of it a small, dark form was standing. A tremulous, cracked voice came to his ears.

"Willy, Willy, where are you?"

He replied at once.

determination.

"I'm here, mother. I won't be long." With that word "mother" he had taken up the trust, acknowledging his sonship. And at the same time a strange thing had occurred. All at once, from the slow-ploughed furrow of his brain, there had flashed up a thought of gold. Such a thing had never happened before, probably never would again; he barely allowed himself to marvel at the wonder, but snatched it eagerly, suddenly knowing what more was to be done. Taking the girl by the

shoulders, he began to speak with earnest

"There's one thing you've forgot, Mary. She thinks—you know what she thinks about you and me, and she's glad. Mary, if I'm to be Willy to her, I must be Willy to you too. Of course, I know it's not the same thing——" The determination had gone now from his voice, leaving it humble. "I know it couldn't be the same thing, but—just for her sake . . ."

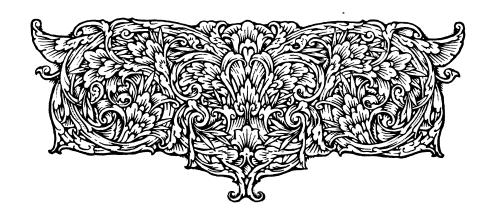
He had felt her start under his hands. Now he waited, apprehensive of her silence. It lasted long enough to put him into a cold sweat of fear. Then out of the flowerscented dark her answer came, a mere whisper of sound.

"Only for her sake, Bob?"

It was some minutes before the two returned to the cottage. There was room for both side by side on the narrow path this time.

A little scurrying figure met them and an old voice greeted them joyfully as they walked through the doorway.

There issued forth a quavering laugh of pure contentment. Thin, crooked fingers grasped the lamp and removed it from the window out of sight, and the cottage door was closed.



THE LOWLANDER.

OVER the rim of the marshes
A silvery glimpse of the sea;
Scent of the beanfield, song of the wheat,
Sun on the sails of the fishing fleet—
Oh these are the joys for me—

Blush of the purple clover,
Breath of the new-mown hay;
Runnels brimming with mint and cress,
Ribbons of tangled loveliness
That wind to the circling bay.

Far on a snow-capped summit
My wandering fancies yearn
For marshy swamps where the sea-gulls feed,
In emerald maze of rush and reed,

When tidal waters turn.

Oh sing me a song of the lowlands,
And the lilt of your lullaby
Shall waft me over the Alpine snows
To a ragged hedge where the blackthorn blows—
A lowlander am I.

LILIAN HOLMES.



PHANTOM ISLAND

By H. MORTIMER BATTEN, F.Z.S.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

EVER a sound on the murky mystery of the semi-tropical moonlight. Even the leaves of the silver birches did not stir, and photographers will tell you that at no time, day or night, are the leaves of the birch so still as to permit a time exposure.

All day the timber-wagons had creaked and wallowed down the mountain face, sinking axle deep, cutting ruts which would remain for centuries, unless in course of time they became wash-outs; while the lumbermen cursed and sweated, and the heavy rain streamed down their bronzed faces.

With their departure silence had fallen upon the slope, the rain had ceased, and the sun sank to her setting in a blood-streaked, angry sky. And now, with the rising of the moon, there was not a cloud visible, not a gossamer streak from skyline to skyline. Overhead the air was clear as crystal, but down in the valley-bottom, which was flat as a table from slope to slope as though it were once the bed of a lake—as doubtless it was-the white mist hung. It was like a valley filled with milk, freshly drawn milk from the cow, for the mist was white and level and opaque. It hid such undulations as there were, save that in the centre, midway across the valley, an island stood -an unreal, fantastic island, for it consisted of tree-tops rising black as ebony above the flood.

Thither at dusk a pack of black game,

disturbed by the bedlam in the forest, had made their way, and now they were roosting in the low, dense timber scarcely above the

fog-line.

The island was in reality just a timber-covered outcrop in the midst of the swampy pasture-lands. Almost worthless pasture-lands they were, waste lands, indeed, badlands, but beloved of the wild-fowl, and throughout the level stretch the lapwings bred in such numbers that man, over-familiar with their presence, seldom disturbed their nests. There the black game and the roedeer mustered each dusk and dawn to seek their fare from the damp and peaty earth, and for these and a thousand other woodland folk the island was common property.

Now a white wild swan, heedless and trusting as wild swans are at certain seasons, was sitting on her oval, mud-bedaubed eggs in the open space in the centre of the island.

Presently a roebuck, followed by two hinds and a fawn, came down from the wood. They dropped from the boundary wall, alighting in the centre of the road, looked sharply up and down while the moonlight shone in their big, soft eyes, then lightly bounded the second wall, and went on by their chosen path into the sea of mist. For thirty seconds one saw the head and the horns of the buck gliding above the mist, a bodiless wraith, then as a barn-owl shrieked shrilly that also vanished.

There was a pause of perhaps three minutes, then the roe-deer came back. They came in reverse order, the fawn leading, which meant that they had turned about swiftly, each butting the other to get on with it. They seemed disquieted, if not alarmed, yet they had seen nothing to disturb them, or at least nothing which the human senses could have discerned. They crossed the road, without undue haste, though certainly without wasting time, and went back into the wood.

Scarcely was the coast clear when a fox extricated himself from a draining gully close by. He sat down in the centre of the road and scratched his right ear, but in the middle of the proceeding he froze, still in the attitude of scratching. He gazed up the roadway till the light of the approaching automobile shone green in his eyes, then he crossed into the long sodden grass and crouched there, flat as a lizard, while the car sloshed by on the muddy road, and the men inside it raised their voices to make themselves heard in the rush of the mild night air. While the red

tail-lamp still glowed in the distance, Reynard got up, sniffed the wheel tracks of the car, then chasing his tail a round or two vanished through a hole in the wall and went down into the lake of mist.

He was gone to hunt lapwing chicks, but ere two minutes had passed one heard the pitter-patter, pitter-patter of his paws along the muddy track beaten out by the water-hens. He was coming back, and reaching the centre of the road he glanced over his shoulder towards the mist sea, bristling a little, possibly because his plans for the night were now disorganised. What he had seen there I do not know, nothing indeed which human eyes could have seen, yet he trotted briskly back into the wood. And among all our wild folk the roe-deer and the rufus fox are passing wise, and canny in their wisdom.

Shortly after, something streaked across the road, something small and dark and nimble, and so swiftly did it pass that, for all the white intensity of the moonlight, human eyes could not have discerned it. There followed a second and a third, then three or four bunched together, and they too passed down into the mist, they too were on their way to hunt lapwing chicks, but they did not return. And just above the pearly level, hither and thither, far and near, a barn-owl was wafting, peering down into the whiteness. She uttered a scream ere long, and there came others of her kind and still others, wafting in from the surrounding woods till owls were hawking everywhere, like night-jars during a heather-moth hatch. But still that unnatural, unhealthy quietude brooded, till it seemed that the low red moon might burst and fly into umpteen death-dealing fragments.

Sound came at length, but such sound as seemed afraid of itself, creeping in with a soft-tongued whisper along the low and murky draining gutters, oozing over the muddy trails of the water-fowl, bubbling up from the mole runs with unbecoming frivolity as their crowns broke and dissolved Here a rusty tin can, deposited earthwards. by the winter floods, stood jauntily agog, then reared proudly upright, if rusty tin cans can be proud, and swung round on its rusty There a pile of drifted sedges, welded by time into a solid mass and fused to the thorns of a white-thorn, set out in search of new anchorage. Moles, the makers of those vast tunnels which perforated the whole level area, rose above-ground and proceeded to paddle laboriously and grotesquely, while time after time the flotillas of owls, hovering above, dived into the mist and struck.

In short, the river was rising, the low lands were becoming inundated, and now there was a gust of wind, or rather a sudden movement of the air. The mists piled into ridges, clongated into milky streaks, curled, wavered, and were gone. Within five minutes the whole vast netherland was clear.

Now one could see the flood waters creeping, oozing in, piling the wreckage before them, gathering strength as though no longer ashamed of their own uncleanness. And since the mist was gone one could hear too the murderous swish of the river; and the fox, seated on a rock among the bracken slopes above, watching over the sparkling purple of the pine-tops, grinned a satisfied and understanding grin. This was to be his night, and so he trotted back down through the scented wood, down across the king's highway, and so to the border of the badlands.

With the departure of the fog the malarial atmosphere which hitherto had prevailed also went. A lapwing shrieked, that highpitched, grating shriek, then another and another, till in the twinkling of an eye it seemed thousands of lapwings were astir. High among the stars a snipe was drumming, and a redshank lent melody to the orchestra by his single, sad, and oft-repeated note. Hither and thither the woodcocks flew, grunting as they pinwheeled through the tree-tops at the forest-foot, and the sandpipers came and went on drooping, shuddering wings, till from the silence confusion became confused. So do the wild birds react one upon another, but all the time that oozing, treacherous flood was creeping in from the river-banks.

The island! That was the general bidding among a thousand earth-born things. Most of the moles died, as moles are apt to die when a green winter and a dry summer leads to a widening of their range beyond the prescribed areas. Most of them I say, but some did not, for the mole, for all his earth-born blindness, possesses a sense of direction rivalled only by the eel. Some of them swam and kept on swimming for hours, their noses ever reverting to the direction of the shore. The mice also died. thousands of them, and the owls were snatching dead and dying mice from the murky surface as swallows whip up Mayfliesflying with them to the trees of the island, where the feathered cats alighted in the

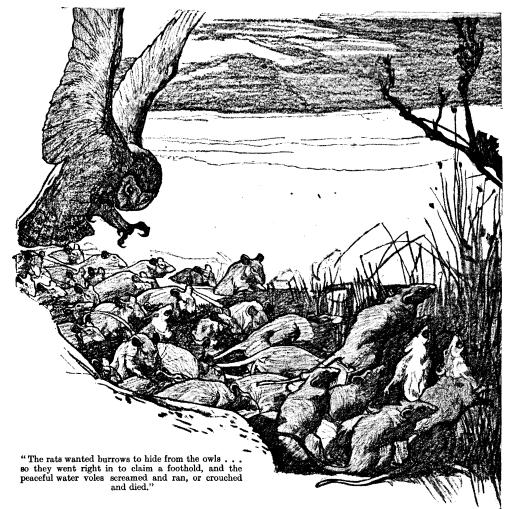
glare of the upper branches. So the black game, roosting below, became uneasy, and the mother swan began to stir a little, but for all the mice that died, hundreds, nay, thousands, safely landed on the island.

Also there were water voles. Their burrows perforated the river-bank for miles on either side. They did the only obvious thing—they made for the island, and the journey was nothing for them. They swam singly and in Indian file, they swam in families and in little packs. Reaching the solid earth again, they proceeded forthwith to burrow under the leaves, for they were deadly afraid of the owls. Each and every one set to work to construct his own tunnel, and even before they came the island was a honeycomb of tunnels.

So, slowly, surely, that place began to creep like a gigantic ant-hill. All round now, save for a black bank or two, lay the mercury floods like a cracked, distorted mirror. The owls were becoming gorged, and were dribbling back to the wood. Littered about the island lay the heads of mice and moles and water voles which they had dropped. Then all at once there arrived a pack of rats—real rats, these, sewer rats. They had swum from bank to bank, increasing ever in numbers, and so they came packed and en masse, head to tail and flank to flank.

Hitherto, things had been fairly peaceful save for the hunters of the upper air, for there was no one on the island save those who longed only for peace. But now within two minutes of the brown rats' arrival, there was a rustling and squeaking everywhere. The rats wanted burrows to hide in from the They had no intention of making burrows for themselves—not when so many already existed, so they went right in to claim a foothold, and the peaceful water voles screamed and ran, or crouched and died. Even the mother swan sat up on end and began to strike at invisible things in the grass. Then she rose still further, using her wings now, hissing angrily, for it seems to be the rule among house rats that there is no possession till all others are driven out or annihilated. Evidently they wanted to possess that island, and they could not leave even the mother swan

Meanwhile, the black grouse were watching, watching. In all the glory of their bridal plumes they were, and as full of fight as so many tipsy half-breeds. So now they slipped down from the lower branches and



lent the lustre of their presence to the general state of chaos. They fought the rats, they fought each other, they buffeted the pure white swan, which knocked half a dozen of them back into the timber. They struck with feathered owl-like feet at the patches of moonlight. They did no good at all beyond adding to the general confusion and to the nervous anxiety of the prospective mother swan.

Mice were dodging everywhere underfoot. Water voles huddled in little clusters under the damp, decaying logs; the rats fought each other, fought the black game, fought the swan; while, proud and aloft, over the fungus festoons of a prostrate log, a shining, succulent snail, with horns erect, slid majestically on without speed.

Were the pixies astir that night? The children who passed along the road on their way to and from school spoke of the place as the Fairies' Island, but if such indeed it

was those strange little folk of the starlight must have hid their eyes and sped where the roe-deer were gone, for now in the midst of the mêlée there came a low, discordant sound, soft yet harsh, a sound not devoid of savage harmony, yet inconceivably sinister and fierce. It smote one's ears as the scent of musk might smite one's nostrils, at first not unpleasant, but growing in offensiveness as it grew in strength. It came from the flood-line as the rats had come, creeping up the leafy slope, and lo!—the musk taint, too.

Every rat froze where he stood, but only for a moment. Then every rat made for such shelter as there was, heedless of all opposition, and stood, his back against the wall; as those little streaks of mercury, glistening now from the water in their coats—for they had not troubled to shake themselves as they landed at this hunters' paradise—came on, every rat waited as the stoats



"Even the mother swan sat up on end and began to strike at invisible things in the grass. Then she rose still further, using her wings now, hissing angrily."

fanned out, angry as wasps disturbed by the harvester's scythe.

It was then that the black game did what the black game seldom do—the wisest thing in the circumstances. They rocketed skywards, and one heard only a muffled whirr of wings departing in the direction of the timber slopes; and the mother swan sank slowly to earth, flattened down, flatter even than a lizard, and watched with terrible intentness.

Nothing is to be gained by telling all the things which happened next, of the redfanged, bristling, horrid carnage which filled the peaceful place from end to end, filled it atmospherically like the roar of a fog-horn, till fear ceased to be, and there remained only that savage, fantastic struggle for existence against odds which all knew to be hopeless; while in the centre of the arena, watched over by the crouching swan, two little bristling, white-fronted fiends fought each other like living devils—fought for nothing at all, save that they had met face to face in the act of murder—fought till one could fight no longer, and was snatched and shaken and done to death by his brother, while the rest slew and slew.

It was a chaos, a shamble, a mêlée, which awaited only the touch of the cloven hoof, and meanwhile the shining snail slid peacefully on to the summit of the log, and proceeded forthwith to sail peacefully down the other side.

Then there came across the besieging floods a sound, terrifying in its immensity, for it seemed to fill the whole night, drawing nearer, nearer. Man would have been afraid, but the wild folk paid no heed. it came, and peering out across the water one would have seen only the dancing fervescence of a cloud of foam, as though a shoal of mackerel were making its way towards the island. Then from the foam there rose dark, indefinite shapes, huddled together, tramping rapidly on till they took definite form—a herd of bullocks, forsooth, heading pell-mell for the place of sanctuary! They burst into the timber and forthwith began to mill round the tiny island. They

trampled its surface black, they crashed through the undergrowth, tearing up the smaller trees; they crowded flank to flank, those on the outside pushing desperately against their inside fellows. One or two fell and were trodden under, to rise bruised and gasping, and to rejoin the scrum, while the white swan stood upon her eggs with wings outspread and hissed and pivoted as they churned up a quagmire all around her.

What of those covered passage ways now, what of such sanctuary as the place afforded? Those which huddled within were crushed where they crouched, and the air was cleared as though by a gale of all those tiny sounds which meant so much, and yet so little. And presently the oxen, tired out by their blind stampede from place to place, began to sniff the bruised and trampled grass and to forget, as bullocks do forget, all which was gone before.

Sixteen hours later the mother wild swan led eight tiny cygnets from the island which this evening was truly an island, led them forth across the blood-stained, rippling waters, reflecting still a sky of crystal clarity, while a water vole nibbled a husk upon the log which the snail had climbed; and about the open arena in the centre of that fairy place a black grouse, in all the shimmering velvet of his springtime garb, filled the air with his chortling, merry note. So to the weak possession fell, and no man would ever know what things had happened there that night, for it was but a tiny drama among a thousand thousand of its kind.

SLUMBER.

THREADS of darkness clog the meadows, Snare the daisy-dappled grass
Where the thin wind-drifted shadows
Wave, and break, and pass.

Silence now; no late bird lingers; Drowsy nods each golden-cup When the sky-man's filmy fingers Shuts the poppies up.

PERCY HASELDEN.



"Miss Parminter started, drew nearer and stared at him; the light from a street-lamp fell upon his face, and she uttered a little gasp. 'Giles!'"

THE HOUSE ON THE HEATH

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

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BEFORE the door of the house in Brook Street the taxi slid to a halt. Miss Fay Parminter glanced at the meter, stepped out to the pavement and bestowed upon the driver his just fee and reward.

"Thank you, miss," said the taxi-driver,

touching his cap.

Miss Parminter started, drew nearer and stared at him; the light from a street-lamp fell upon his face, and she uttered a little gasp.

" Giles!"

The taxi-driver removed his cap and grinned at her. He was a young taxi-driver of quite agreeable appearance, hav-

ing reddish hair, a small reddish moustache of the military pattern, a blue and honest eye and a noticeable jaw.

"Hullo, Fay," he said.

The wholly charming countenance of Miss Parminter registered profound bewilderment.

"Giles! What on earth are you-"

"Keeping the wolf from the door," answered the taxi-driver cheerfully, "with a spanner, as one might say."

Miss Parminter continued to stare at him; to bewilderment was now added

"Do you mean you're—you're—"

"Broke? Yes. Almost fragmentary, in fact."

For a space Miss Parminter looked at the taxi-driver, who looked at Miss Parminter, she being well worth looking at.

"Giles," said Miss Parminter suddenly, "you must come in and tell me all about this. I—I'd no idea—Come along!"

"The practice of leaving one's cab unattended," said the taxi-driver, "is not

encouraged by the constabulary."

"Well, if anyone asks, Simpson can say you're fetching some luggage, or—or having a fit, or something. Come along! There's nobody at home, if that's what's worrying you. Father's at the House, and Mother's dining with the Fallerans."

So Captain Giles Anthony Raeburn Hazard, once of His Majesty's Dragoon Guards, later of Bunthorne Court, E.C.2, and now owner-driver of Licensed Hackney Vehicle Number 50,778, switched off his engine, climbed from his seat and followed a determined young lady across the pavement to the dignified green door. The determined young lady had a habit of being obeyed; also Captain Hazard wanted to obey.

The green door, yielding to Miss Parminter's key, disclosed a narrow hall wherein a butler was gravely considering a barometer, as butlers do when nothing else offers. As the door opened, the butler—a large, moon-faced, baldish person of vaguely canonical aspect—turned and advanced; his calm eye came to rest upon the taxi-driver. It was somehow apparent that he held no high opinion of taxi-drivers as a class.

"Simpson," said Miss Parminter, "if a policeman or anybody asks why that taxi's standing outside, tell me. Come into the

library, Giles."

To display emotion of any kind is a solecism which a self-respecting butler would perish rather than commit. Surprise, anger, resentment, affection—these are not for butlers; not, at least, in business hours. A momentary flicker of astonishment passed over Simpson's face, and was gone.

"Very good, miss," said Simpson.

As the door of the library closed behind them:

"Rather a shock for Simpson," said Fay. "He's been here only a week, and he's not hardened to me yet. Sit down, Giles, and tell me everything."

She took a vast arm-chair and motioned him to another. The taxi-driver sat down

and contemplated the fire.

"Why," he said, "there's not much to tell, Fay. A fool and his money, and so forth."

"But I thought you were in the City with

somebody---"

"So I was. And when the somebody suddenly legged it for foreign parts, I had to start earning my bread in some other way with great speed."

"Oh, Giles! He-swindled you?"

"Well, I was a gift to him, really. don't meet trustful ex-officers with a spot of capital every day. I wanted to get rich quick, and so did he. He got there first, knowing the way. So there I was. always a certain demand for ex-officers with a spot of capital, but ex-officers without capital are nobody's darlings. If I'd had fifteen hundred quid I'd have bought Bill Laidlaw's pig-farm in Lincolnshire—you remember Bill? He wants to sell because he's marrying Hebrew money, and I'd have liked to buy, because pigs are better than sharks, anyway. But I haven't fifteen hundred quid by a long shot. I know cars inside out, and I know London outside in, so I bought the jigger with what was left, passed the exam. with a struggle and took to the road, as we say in the profession. And here I am, till something better turns up. It's not a bad life, all the same."

"But, Giles, why didn't you—I mean, Father would have got you a job. Heaps of people would have got you a job, if——"

"Quite," said the taxi-driver, "but—

well, one has fads, you know, Fay."

A pause.

"So that," remarked Miss Parminter reflectively, "is why you haven't been to see us for two months—or written. I don't mind telling you, Giles, I meant to be pretty haughty about that when you did turn up. I suppose it's too late now. . . . So that's why you were so queer the last time I saw you. That's why . . . Well, never mind. Tell me—oh, you poor man, how inhospitable of me!" She leaned forward and pressed the bell. At once the door opened and the butler was among those present.

"Simpson," said Miss Parminter, "Captain Hazard would like a drink." And when the minion had canonically withdrawn: "Tell me about taxi-driving, Giles. Is it

very exciting?"

"It has its points," said Giles. "You see things from a new angle anyway. You're the first person who's recognised me. I drove old Fletcher-Bainbridge home from his club last night, and he didn't spot me. He gave me threepence, largely in halfpennies." He grinned. "And then people are always leaving things in the cab—the most odd

Hats and—oh, Heavens!" broke off and clapped a hand to his pocket.

"What's the matter?"

" Why, I found this in the cab this morning. I ought to have turned it in to Scotland Yard at once, but I forgot. I've been carrying it about all day."

He laid upon the writing-table an object which glittered in the light; a small pearland-diamond pendant, of rare workmanship

and beauty.

"Valuable thing, too, I should say," he added.

Fay looked at the pendant, started and gave a little cry. She caught it up and stared at it incredulously.

"But, Giles—this is Mother's!"

"What?"

She looked at him blankly.

"Haven't you seen the evening papers?"

"No time. Why?"

"Last night," said Fay, "somebody broke into the house and got away with all Mother's jewellery. Twenty-five thousand pounds' worth—you know how she collects it. Father's offering two thousand pounds reward, but there isn't a clue of any sort. And this is one of the things that were

"Great Scot! Are you sure?"
"Of course I am. Here are Mother's initials on the back—look! Giles, who

dropped this in your cab?"

"Blessed if I know, Fay. I'm supposed to search the cab after every trip, but very often one hasn't time. It might have been there——"

The door opened, and there entered to them the butler, gravely bearing potent liquors upon a mighty silver tray.

"Simpson," said Fay, "what time do the police think the burglary happened?"

Simpson deposited the tray upon the writing-table, glanced with respectful interest at the pendant, and cleared his throat.

"Soon after midnight, I understand, miss. Her ladyship returned home about eleven, and put away her jewellery herself in the small safe. I locked up and retired at eleven-fifteen."

"There you are, Giles," said Fay. "Who

was in your cab after midnight?"

Meditation on the part of Captain Hazard. "Well, when the theatres came out, I took some people from the Strand to South Kensington. Then I brought a couple of lads back to Piccadilly, and drifted about a bit and picked up Fletcher-Bainbridge. delivered him at his place about twelveforty-five, I should say. And then—oh yes -there was the fellow in the mackintosh. I got him in Oxford Street as I came away from Portman Square. Short, fat fellow with a handbag. He was the last fare I had."

"That's him!" cried Fay, for excitement is death to grammar. "Where did you

take him?"

"A house on Hampstead Heath."

"Could you find it again?"

"Oh yes. He stopped me a little way from it, but there aren't so many houses thereabouts."

Miss Parminter reflected briefly; then abruptly she stood up.

"Come along, Giles!" she said.

Captain Hazard rose also, regarding her dubiously.

"What's the idea?" he asked.

"We're going to Hampstead to interview that fare of yours, of course. This pendant was stolen from here soon after midnight, and this morning you found it in your cab. The Hampstead gentleman's the only person who could possibly have dropped it. Simpson, if anybody asks, I'm out."

Simpson coughed—a genteel, apologetic

"If you will forgive the liberty, miss, I hope you will not do anything—ah—rash. If I might suggest——"

"I can look after myself, Simpson, thanks. And Captain Hazard will be there. Do be

quick, Giles!"

Thus, before the startled Captain Hazard, endeavouring to adjust himself to this unexpected development, could voice coherent protest, he found himself again upon the pavement before his licensed hackney car-

"It's just ten," said Fay. "With luck we can get there and back before Mother comes home. We ought to have some news

for her."

"But look here, Fay, we can't very well —I mean to say, if there's anything in this, it's a police job. We---"

Miss Parminter stamped her charming

"Police be jiggered! Do you, or do you not, want that pig-farm?"

"Pig-farm?" echoed "What the—" Giles foggily.

" Two thousand reward!" pounds snapped Fay. "Now, for goodness' sake, Giles, bustle about!" She turned and vanished into the taxi.

For a moment Captain Hazard stood as if

in thought. Suddenly he laughed aloud and thrust his face in at the window.

"Fay, you're a three-ply brick! Let's go!" He jumped forward, swung the engine to life and scrambled into his seat.

The taxi slid out of Brook Street into Grosvenor Square and across Oxford Street into Orchard Street. As taxis go, it was a good taxi, sound of tyre and engine, and it made good time northwards along Baker Street and the spacious emptiness of the Finchley Road. At Swiss Cottage it swung half right into the Semitic opulence of Fitzjohn's Avenue, climbed the hill of Old Hampstead, and so came out upon the open Heath, where the night was dark and the pond lay black under the sky. Giles turned to the right, and Fay lost all sense of direction as they plunged into the valley. The Heath seemed to be utterly empty of life; save for a solitary motorcyclist who came roaring up from behind, passed them and disappeared, they met nobody upon the way. Presently the taxi slowed and stopped; the face of Giles appeared at the window.

"The house is just round the corner. Better park the bus here while I recon-

noitre."

Fay emerged upon the road and looked about. To right and left lay the Heath; ahead were visible the chimneys of a considerable house.

"Now," said Giles, "I'll—hullo!" For the lights of the taxi had abruptly snapped out. He stepped forward and conducted a brief examination. "Fuse gone," he announced. "I can fix it, but I don't want to waste time now. I'll shove her behind those trees over there, in case anything comes along. Stand aside, girl." He swung himself aboard again. The taxi backed, ran into the shelter of the trees and stopped. Giles switched off the engine and came back to Fay.

"Get inside," he ordered, "and wait for

me.'

"What?" said Fay indignantly. "Cer-

tainly not! I'm coming-"

"Not so. This may be an outsize mare's-nest, but if it isn't, a woman's place is the home. What would your people do to me if anything happened to you?"

"Nonsense! I'm perfectly—"

"You'll stay here and mind my cab. If anyone comes along, tell 'em my lights failed and I've gone for a match. If I'm not back within a reasonable time, notify the Home Secretary—I believe that's the usual procedure. Otherwise the whole thing's off, my lady."

Miss Parminter looked at him, remarked the prominence of his jaw, and sighed in a

resigned way.

"All right, Giles," she said meekly.

So presently, Miss Parminter safely housed, Captain Hazard transferred a large spanner from his tool-box to his pocket, bade his ally a cheerful farewell and set off upon his investigation.

The house lay back a little from the road, being separated therefrom by a small lawn and a semicircular drive. No light showed in any window, but a pale gleam shone through the fanlight above the door. Giles marched boldly up the drive, mounted the low steps and brought the knocker vigorously into play.

A step sounded within, and the door opened. Giles saw a large, bare hall, lit only by a candle upon a small table, and before him a long, lean, very bow-legged man whose most noticeable feature was a humor-

ously broken nose.

"Good evening," said Giles amiably. "I called to ask if anybody here has lost anything. I brought a fare to this house last night, and afterwards I found something in my cab."

The bow-legged man did not immediately reply, but peered past Giles down the drive

in a faintly puzzled manner.

"Where's your cab?" he demanded

"Down the road. My lights failed and I was afraid I wouldn't be able to turn if I brought her right up."

"Ah," said the bow-legged man. And then: "Found something, eh? What was it?"

"That," returned Giles politely, "is for you to say, I think."

The bow-legged man shook his head.

"I don't think it belongs to anyone here, whatever it is. But if you'll come in, I'll make inquiries."

He moved aside, and Giles, after an instant's hesitation, stepped into the hall, his right hand caressing the spanner in his pocket. But the other's manner was so free from suspicion or alarm that the theory of the mare's-nest seemed to gain in probability

"Wait in here, will you?" said the bowlegged man. "I won't keep you a minute."

He crossed the hall and opened a door. Giles, alertly advancing, was almost at the threshold when he perceived that beyond the door lay utter darkness. He stopped and half turned; at which precise moment a powerful hand took him between the shoulders and thrust him violently forwards. Captain Hazard shot through the doorway at a staggering run and came into severe contact with a wall. The door slammed; a key turned; footsteps departed.

Giles, recovering his breath, swore aloud and with immense fervour. He felt very angry indeed, chiefly with the bow-legged man, but also with himself for having been so readily befooled. Up to this point, notwithstanding Fay's reasoning, he had not been entirely persuaded to her point of view: the thing seemed too fantastic. One read of such affairs in the papers from time to time, but nothing of the kind had ever happened to him. It seemed highly improbable that the house on the Heath could be in any way involved in the theft of Lady Parminter's gauds.

Now, however, the mare's-nest theory perished on the spot, for the practice of locking taxi-drivers in cupboards—that, as a brief inspection assured him, being the nature of his prison—is not prevalent in law-abiding circles. Fay, very clearly, had been perfectly right. Giles swore again, protruded his jaw, drew the spanner from his pocket and launched a furious attack upon the door.

Through the resultant din he was aware of voices.

"... must be in the cab. Harry, go and ..."

"Hell, what's he got in there? That door won't hold . . ."

"Here, George!... Put that light out.... Now!"

The door of the cupboard flew open so suddenly that Giles, poising himself for one last devastating blow, lost his balance and stumbled out into the hall. Instantly persons fell upon him from all sides. Hands groped for him, clutched him, belaboured him; the spanner was twisted from his grasp; an arm slid lovingly about his neck, apparently with intent to throttle; boots discovered his shins. Nobody spoke, nor could he see his assailants, for the hall was now black as Eblis. He noted, however, that they were all loud breathers.

For a brief space the little knot of men staggered this way and that. Gradually it grew clear to Giles that his attackers were but three in number, and not, as he had at first supposed, thirty or so. There were the would-be strangler, that other who had reft the spanner from him, and a third who was earnestly endeavouring to trip him up. Giles, squandering valuable breath in a shout of purest rage, battled grimly on.

The affair, though full of incident, was quite short in point of time. Giles did his best, but he was outnumbered and confused by the gloom. Not so many years ago he had figured as runner-up in the Army Middleweight Championship, and in any contest conducted under Queensberry rules could be relied upon to acquit himself with credit. But the present imbroglio was remarkable chiefly for its lack of those refinements which make amateur boxing so agreeable to watch. His adversaries seemed anxious only to bring him to earth and were evidently quite careless how that end was achieved. They employed, indiscriminately and with considerable venom, their hands, their feet, their teeth and their heads. Thus, while one butted him shrewdly in the stomach, another bit him hungrily in the wrist and the third hacked his leg. grunted and lashed out a long left, hit something soft, heard a yelp of agony, and rejoiced. One second later his legs were swept from under him, and he went to the floor with a crash that seemed to shake the house. And upon the floor he remained, for one sat weightily upon his chest and another upon his legs.

A voice spoke out of the darkness. An aggrieved voice. The voice of one in pain.

"Hell! He's nearly knocked my eye out."

"Come—here," begged Giles—wheezily, by reason of the load upon his diaphragm, "and—I'll—finish—the job!"

This invitation was not even acknowledged.

"Here's the cord," said the voice in a harsh whisper. "Tie him up and bring him upstairs. Hurry now, George!"

George, ably abetted by Harry, hurried to such purpose that in a very short space of time Captain Hazard, despite his struggles, was so stoutly and scientifically secured at wrist and ankle that further endeavour was beyond his powers. Harry and George, hoisting him to their shoulders as if he had been a coffin or a bale of hay, carried him upstairs in the wake of the aggrieved voice. Upon the landing someone was heard to open a door; a match flared and went out.

"In here," said the voice.

Captain Hazard was borne into the room and dropped to the ground in a manner so casual that it wellnigh shattered his spinal column. The door closed again, feet tramped down the stairs. Another door slammed afar off, and he heard the staccato chatter of a motor-cycle departing down the drive. Thereafter, for what seemed like a decade but was actually about five minutes, silence lay upon the house. This was broken by the sudden hum of a car's engine and a faint crackling of wheels upon the gravel of the drive. This, too, died away, and silence settled down again.

If Giles had been angry before, he was now almost apoplectic. Here was a pretty end to an enterprise so blithely undertaken! Like a trusting infant he had sauntered wide-eyed into the trap, subsequently permitting the unseen three to deal with him precisely as they desired, at the approximate cost to themselves of one black eye. Captain Hazard cursed very bitterly and writhed upon the dusty floor, the humiliation of his predicament growing each moment more apparent to him. What, he wondered miserably, would Fay think of him—a lathand-plaster paladin, a cardboard knight who

could not even defend himself? The thought of that gracious lady, hopefully awaiting his triumphant return, spurred him to fresh and equally unproductive writhings. What if the miscreants had come upon her as she sat, all unsuspecting, in the taxi? What if—Giles cursed again and so furiously wrestled with his bonds that he nearly broke a blood-vessel.

He was thus engaged when there came to him a faint noise. He lay still, panting, and soon the noise was identifiable as that of a car rapidly approaching the house. It grew louder, and there was again the crackling of wheels upon the gravel. The car stopped, and the purr of its engine also; there followed a confused scratching sound, and a new phenomenon presented itself to his notice.

The room wherein he lay was small and low-ceilinged, lit by a narrow window set low in the wall. The dim rectangle of this window was now half obscured by a vague shape—a shape which tapped briskly upon the glass and spoke his name.

"Giles! Giles! Are you there?"



Captain Hazard uttered a loud and joyful

"Fay! Good for you, old lady!" The window cracked loudly, and a segment of glass clattered to the floor. A hand came through the gap and found the latch; there was a brief struggle, and the presence of dishevelled and distinctly shamefaced figure at her feet. "All tied up, are you? I say, we are being adventurous! Half a second-I've got some nail-scissors somewhere."

The nail-scissors being forthcoming, Captain Hazard was presently a free, if



"'Oh, you poor Giles!' said Fay, advancing and peering down at the dusty, dishevelled and distinctly shame-faced figure at her feet. 'All tied up, are you? I say, we are being adventurous!'"

Miss Fay Parminter added distinction to the room.

"Oh, you poor Giles!" said Fay, advancing and peering down at the dusty, sheepish, man. He rose to his feet and shook himself.

"Much obliged, Fay. How the dickens did you get here?"

From Miss Parminter there proceeded what in a less charming young lady must

have been termed a giggle.

"Did you think," she asked, "I was going to twiddle my thumbs in the cab while you did all the work? I was just behind you when you came in here, and I've been lurking behind a bush ever since. I saw you go in, and then I heard you yell. I didn't know what to do, so I waited, and presently I saw somebody strike a match in here. Then three men came rushing out of the house, and one jumped on a motor-bike and went off at seventy miles an hour. Another one bolted down the drive and the third ran round to the back of the house. I waited a bit more, and presently the second one came running back, just as the other came round the side of the house in a I heard one of them say: 'Not a sign of it. Must have left it out on the Heath somewhere.' And the other said: 'Well, we can't hang about any longer. I don't believe he had anybody with him, anyway.' And they hopped in and drove off. Then I thought I'd look for you, but the door was locked and the windows were shuttered and I couldn't find a ladder or anything. So I rushed back to the taxi, drove it in under this window and climbed up on the hood. That's all. Now it's your turn."

Giles, rubbing his chafed wrists, surveyed her with admiration faintly tinged with

gloom.

"Anne," he said, "you're unique. Me? Oh, they shoved me in a cupboard and then let me out and tied me up and threw me in here. That," said Giles morosely, "is all. I've bungled this show from start to finish, and if it hadn't been for you I might have rotted here for weeks. As it is, I've let 'em get clean away, and I hadn't a chance to see any of 'em, except the fellow who let me in. The cove on the motor-bike must be the boss, I think. I'd give a lot," he added yearningly, "for the pleasure of meeting him again."

"Never mind," said Fay consolingly. "After all, we've found out something, haven't we? Now we'd better toddle home and report. We'll go out this way, as the

door's locked."

Thus, some few minutes later, a slightly hazardous exit via the window and the roof of the taxi having been achieved, Giles set to work to revive his recalcitrant lamps. This done, he started his engine, climbed to his seat and laid a course for London, W. He drove gloomily, for it seemed to him

that he emerged discreditably from this affair, and the thought irked him. No man cares to appear a witless incompetent in the presence of a lady, and particularly of such a lady as Miss Fay Parminter. Giles, sombrely driving Mayfairwards, ever and anon muttered to himself. . . .

For the second time that evening the taxi pulled up before the house in Brook Street, and for the second time Giles followed his passenger to the dignified green door. The hall was empty, but from the library came a murmur of voices.

"Father and Mother are back," announced Fay. "Well, we've got a little bit of news for them." She opened the door

of the library and marched in.

Sir Vernon Parminter, M.P.—tall, portly, thrice-chinned, immaculate, the legislator de luxe—stood upon the hearthrug, twirling gold-rimmed glasses upon a silken cord. His consort—short, plump, handsome, amiable, notably upholstered and complexioned—adorned a sofa near the window. At their daughter's entry they turned upon her a combined and censorious regard. Said Lady Parminter, severely:

"Fay, where have you been? We——"Her glance encountering Giles, she started. "Who—why, it's—surely it's Captain Hazard!"

"Eh?" exclaimed Sir Vernon, staring. "So it is, by Jove! Glad to see you, Hazard, my boy." His slightly pompous eye travelled over the visitor, noting the peaked cap, the official badge, the other insignia of the taxi-driver's craft. "But what the deuce——?"

"Please, people," said Fay, with that brisk authority that so well became her, "hush yourselves and let me talk. Giles and I have had a very stirring time, and done Mother a bit of good, too." And forthwith she plunged into her tale of the night's adventure, hiding nothing, revealing all. And if she threw something of a halo about Giles's part in the affair, who are we to chide her?

"Bless my soul!" said Sir Vernon, as she finished. "I never heard anything so

-they got away, then?"

"They did," admitted Giles regretfully, but I can describe one of 'em pretty well, though I'm afraid he's not the ringleader. Oh—and here's your pendant, Lady Parminter."

"Well, that's something," said Lady Parminter, accepting her property. "I'm sure we're very grateful to you, Captain Hazard.

And so you're driving a taxi nowadays?

Really I call that most original!"

"Most extraordinary affair," declared Sir Vernon, twirling his glasses. "I'd better tell Simpson to notify the police at once." He rang the bell. The door opened, and the canonical Simpson entered in his soundless way.

"Ah, Simpson," said Sir Vernon, "ring up Scotland Yard and ask them to send——"

A sudden cry from Captain Hazard cut him short. That young man had taken a quick stride forward and was staring at the butler as at some spectral visitant from beyond the tomb.

"Heavens!" he cried. "Of course! Why didn't we think of it, Fay? Simpson, my friend, where did you get that black eye?"

This simple query produced a noticeable sensation. Now that it was thus publicly proclaimed, it became apparent to all present that the left eye of Simpson was indubitably black—or would be on the morrow. Manifestly the aid of divers unguents had been enlisted to disguise the injury, but there is about a genuine black eye something that rises superior to such attempts at camouflage. Simpson had a black eye; the fact was incontestable.

It appeared, however, that Simpson resented this advertising of his disfigurement, for his moon-like visage, which at sight of Giles had taken on a faint greenish tinge, now turned very pale. With an agility unexpected in one of his bulk, the butler whirled about and leaped for the door. But Giles, impelled by the memory of his wrongs, placed a hand upon the writingtable, vaulted it neatly, hurled himself forward in a kind of running dive, collared Simpson about the knees and laid him very low. As the butler fell, so he lay, a collision between his skull and the wainscot having temporarily banished his wits.

"Bless my soul!" said Sir Vernon

blankly. . . .

Some time later a young lady of quality held private converse with a taxi-driver.

"I thought," the young lady was saying,

"he had such a kind face! And he only took this job so that he could open the door to his friend and show him the safe!"

"I must say," observed Giles, "I admire his nerve. He must have been scared cold when we started off, but he never batted an eyelash. He let us get away, told the other servants he'd had a hurry-call to somebody's death-bed, got his motor-bike out of the garage and beat us to it. It was the only way he could warn his pals. I expect he meant to get 'em out of the house before we got there, being afraid they might lose their nerve if we walked in on 'em unannounced. But they hadn't time to clear out, so he helped 'em to put it over me, told 'em to go while the going was good, and rushed back here. He must have been rather worried when you didn't show up, but after all it didn't matter so long as you hadn't seen anything. He knew he'd have to go on buttling for a bit, to avoid being suspected, and they'd left nothing in the house that could give 'em away. It seems to me he showed generalship of no mean order."

"Well, he won't be able to show any more for a year or two," said Fay. "Nor his friends, if the police get them as easily as they seem to expect. And when they are caught, you'll come into the money, Giles. Won't that be nice?"

"Oh, rot! I can't take——'

"You'll have to, I'm afraid. Mother says so."

There followed a little pause.

"Giles," said Miss Parminter suddenly but with the greatest composure, "not so very long ago you wanted to ask me to marry you, didn't you?"

Captain Hazard started violently and

turned puce in the face.

" Er___" he said. " Er___"

"But you thought you were too poor, didn't you, Giles?"

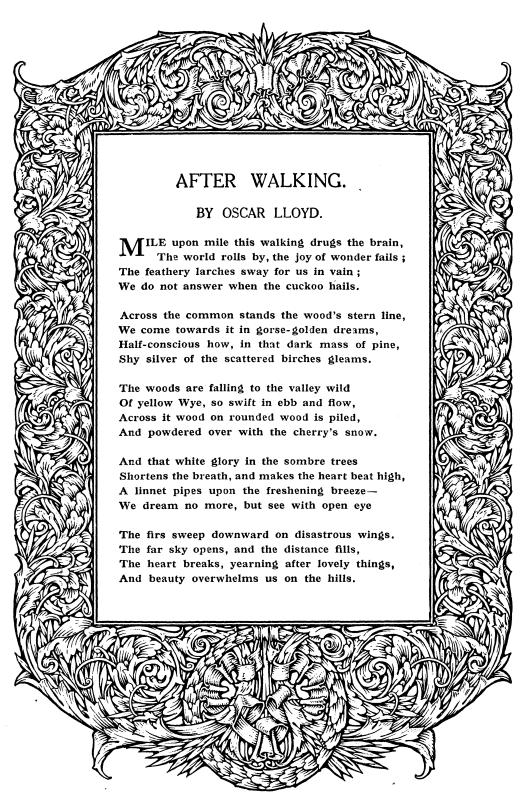
"Er_" said Captain Hazard.

"But now you've got a pig-farm, haven't you, Giles?"

Captain Hazard repeated his previous remark.

"I love pigs, Giles," said Miss Parminter.







HORACE

By PAULA HUDD

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANCIS E. HILEY

NYONE who looked less like a fairy than Mrs. Muggs could not possibly be imagined, but it is nevertheless a fact that by the mere act of pulling a cord on either side of the large office window she transformed a murky November day into a breezy May morning of surprising blue and gold.

She then picked up a mangy broom and, under the impression that she was disposing of the dust, transferred it from the floor to the desks and chairs: after which she took

a moth-eaten duster from her apron pocket and transferred the dust back to the floor again.... In the opinion of Mrs. Muggs the general office of Mace, Town and Mace was now cleaned.

There still remained the inner office, the sanctum of the manager, the place where, in Mrs. Muggs' opinion, she earned every penny of her weekly pittance by reason of the fact that the room had a totally unnecessary adornment in the shape of a carpet, not to mention a

clock and two ornaments on the mantelpiece.

Glancing at the clock, Mrs. Muggs decided that if she left the dusting of the ornaments till the next morning she might be out of the place before that dratted office boy, 'Orace, arrived.

So with the carpet-brush—a poor devitalised specimen—in her hand, ponderously, with much obvious breathing and no obvious enthusiasm, Mrs. Muggs descended to her knees and switched the dust from the carpet to the boards surrounding it, after which the inner sanctum went through precisely the same process of "cleaning" as the lesspretentious outer office.

The clock was treated to a ponderous caress that left it with a smear on its face, while the vases were ignored, retaining a cloak of dust under which to hide the shame

of their useless existence.

But despite this omission Mrs. Muggs was too late to avoid Horace. She was standing well in the middle of the room and shaking her duster with more energy than she had yet displayed when the door of the outer office was flung wide and Horace made his entry.

Horace always made his entry, he did not merely come in: the door-hinges were put to their fullest use, the door-handle gave its most ostentatious rattle and Horace

had arrived.

To describe Horace's appearance is scarcely to describe Horace: to say he had a tolerably clean collar and a tolerably clean face, neck and hands would be to tell you that he had a tolerably good mother: to say that he had a thick, serviceable and unbecoming suit, and heavy, sound-soled boots, would be to let you know that his father was an average working man bringing his wages home "regular" every Friday night: to say that he was small for his fifteen years and seemed, despite his very high collar, altogether too much of the schoolboy to be earning his living, would only be to show you that he was a typical product of his class. . . . But to say that he had a buttonhole, a very noticeable watch-chain with no watch on the end, a large gappytoothed smile, a snub nose, and wide-set eyes that could convey all of this world's devilment and much of this world's wisdom in one twinkle, that is to show you something of the real Horace.

He tipped his bowler hat Charlie Chaplin fashion to Mrs. Muggs, then took it off and

flung it deftly on to a peg.

"G'morning, Ma. . . . Working overtime, aren't you?'

Mrs. Muggs gathered together her implements in dignified silence and disposed of them in a cupboard from which she took her coat. Her small plush hat, plus its morning's quota of dust, still reposed on her

In portentous, heavy-breathed silence she proceeded to roll up her apron and pin it across her ample girth, having first wiped her face with a corner of it. Then she donned the long, plush coat and extracted from one of the pockets a large handkerchief and a much-worn purse. Mrs. Muggs was not dressed for the street till these articles were transferred from her pocket to her grimy hand.

With a flourish Horace opened the door

for her.

Good-bye, Chatterbox," he chuckled, as with one malevolent glance at him she passed out. . . .

After that the office filled quickly. First came the head woman clerk, Miss Goddard, conscientious and thin-lipped. She was the kind of woman who all her life had been

mean with her favours and called it "having proper pride."

And last—very much last—came Daisy, the telephone clerk, who, because a manytimes-removed relation of her mother had been Spanish, affected large ear-rings and exotic colours, and used every opportunity to refer to her Southern blood.

Miss Goddard had already ruled the red line in the time book and for the third time that week Daisy's signature came below it. That meant being reported to the manager. Miss Goddard pointed this out to her with ill-concealed satisfaction.

"It can't be helped!" Daisy shrugged her shoulders and swung herself round from "We Southerners have no idea the hips. of time!"

Old Bennett, the accountant, looked over

the top of his glasses at her.

"Ah," he said slowly, in what Horace described as his "Hamlet voice"—Horace being a regular attendant at the Old Vic, "Time waits for no man; 'no, nor woman neither.' "

Even Miss Goddard gave a wintry smile for that, but Daisy changed the subject

"Heard about that five pounds yet,

Horace?" she queried.

This referred to a competition, organised by some wireless journal, for which Horace had entered, the first prize being five

pounds.

"The result comes out to-morrow," he answered, "and I get the money on Satur-

"Well, buy me a buttonhole, dearie, because my boy's taking me down to Kew in the afternoon."

Horace shook his head.

"I shan't be able to spare a sixpence of it; it'll all go on the valve set I'm going to make. I've got a fine circuit from a chap who gets Germany and Spain as easily as he gets 2LO."

Bennett looked up from his desk again.

"But why worry," he put in quietly, "if you can get America on your crystal set

as you did the other night?"

Horace went a little pink and debated between telling the truth with words and implying a lie with silence. He didn't hesitate long, because, as the manager was wont to say of him in his absence—"He's a little devil and as cunning as they make 'em, but, thank Heaven, he's truthful."

"I'm not absolutely certain now that it was America," he admitted. "I found afterwards that my aerial had come down so it might have been the Savoy band very faint. . . . But it sounded like Yankees

right enough."

Old Bennett's eyelids barely flickered.

"Personally," he said, still in his Hamlet voice, "I can't always judge the fine shades of difference between say—a Scotsman and a Yankee playing the saxophone."

Horace was equal to the occasion.

"Well, you shall come and hear the difference when I've got that valve set," he retorted.

Soon after which, the manager entered and the office settled down to its morning routine.

Mrs. Muggs was still at work on the outer office when Horace arrived next morning. Mrs. Muggs was not late—people who never hurry are never late—but Horace was remarkably early.

"I've got the laugh of 'em all this time," he announced jubilantly. "I've won that

fiver, Ma."

"Go hon," said Mrs. Muggs.

"I have, straight! Look, here's me name in the paper—Mr. Horace Bridges. You could have knocked me down with a feather when I saw it."

Mrs. Muggs sniffed.

"You always seemed pretty sure of winnin' it."

"Well, I was right, wasn't I?" retorted Horace unanswerably.

"Don't you be too cocky till you get the

money," admonished Mrs. Muggs.

"I get that Saturday morning, sure. . . . You'll be perlite to me that morning, I bet -seeing me coming in with a flower in me coat and the dibs in me pocket."

"I shan't be 'ere. . . . I'm goin' to ask for the mornin' off. Me cousin, wot married a farmer just outside of Chislehurst, she's asked me to stay a couple o' days."

"The one's what got a fifty-foot aerial mast and got America on two valves?" queried Horace. Mrs. Muggs "Then be a sport and ask him wot valves he buys—get him to put it down on a bit o' paper for me. I'm going to buy the things and make a valve set when I get this money."

"I like your cheek! Saucy as you can be to me and then askin' favers. P'r'aps

I shan't go, anyway."

No one looking at Mrs. Muggs' homely and rather dour countenance would have guessed that she was dallying with a dream. . . . Mrs. Muggs had always wanted to go and stay at the Chislehurst farm-house. She had lived since her widowhood in one room in Deptford. Her daughters—the three eldest married and scattered, the youngest in a situation as under-housemaid in town-all disapproved of the Chistehurst cousin and had always persuaded her against accepting the invitations which came to her at regular intervals. . . But now Mrs. Muggs contemplated going without letting them know. The Chislehurst cousin had sent the fare this time and begged her to come while the May was at its best.

Mrs. Muggs had long cherished a dream of having a cup of tea under a may-tree in full bloom. . . . And it was with that dream that she now dallied, leaning on her broom and looking quite unpleasantly into Horace's impertinent little face.

Anyway, it's nothink to do with you," she said suddenly, and went on with her

work.

Horace saved his piece of news till the office was full and then drew the paper from his pocket and handed it over to Bennett.

"See anythink familiarlike there?" he

queried, with admirable nonchalance.

Old Bennett rose to the occasion splendidly. He scrambled from his stool and patted Horace on the back and used his best Hamlet tones.

"Splendid, my boy, splendid! I'm very glad. Congratulations, hearty congratulations," and he held out his hand.

Horace was almost overcome but man-

whole matter—except Daisy. She, quite inexcusably, kissed him on both cheeks and



aged to murmur that "it was nothing, nothing at all."

The office behaved very suitably about the

called him a "cute kid," thereby ruining her one faint chance of receiving a buttonhole on Saturday.

Miss Goddard said he ought to put the five pounds in the savings bank instead of spending it on a valve set that probably wouldn't work.

Bennett having returned to his desk,

looked up over his glasses again.

"I can't quite agree with that," he said slowly. "If he makes the set himself he's repaid for the expenditure whether it works or not."

Horace decided that old Bennett was a

sport but a bit balmy at times.

"It'll work, you bet," he said. "But if it doesn't . . . well, I've seen me name printed."

> He was a little perturbed on Saturday morning at receiving a cheque instead of the five onepound notes that he had some-

When the office closed at midday he was going home to wash and brush up and have tea, and then sally forth with a friend to purchase the necessary parts for making a start on his valve set.

Life looked very good to Horace on that Saturday morning, and he cheerfully battled with the dust in the manager's office, though, in the ordinary way, he flatly refused to do Mrs. Muggs' work in her absence

At ten minutes to one he hastily consumed the sandwich and bun he had brought with him, and at one o'clock precisely he dashed out of the office and caught a bus going south-eastward.

All the way home he studied the sketched diagram of his new circuit. It was going to be a wonderful set and later on he might have a bit more luck and run to a loud



how expected. But old Bennett obligingly offered to cash it and it was great fun writing his name on the back of it.

He reached home in a beatific state of mind and chopped wood energetically for his mother before having

his wash and brush up.

After tea in the kitchen he wandered into the front room and picked up the headphones. . . . Now that fulfilment of his dream was so near he felt very intolerant of his little crystal set. . . . It really limited a chap too much. But the set he was going to make . . .

Suddenly the voice in his ears wrenched

his thoughts away from himself:

"I have here a special S.O.S. Will Mrs. Muggs, whose last known address was 2 The Lane, Deptford, and who is presumably still residing there but has gone away on a visit, leaving no address, please go at once to her daughter who is lying dangerously ill in St. George's Hospital. Mrs. Muggs, 2 The Lane, Deptford."

Horace took the receivers off his head slowly. . . . Mrs. Muggs-that fat, silly old woman that he couldn't really stand —Mrs. Muggs exalted to the importance of a special S.O.S. from 2LO. . . . It was funny . . . funny hearing somebody you knew mentioned like that. And-and he knew where she was . . . she was in a farmhouse outside Chislehurst, a farm-house with a fifty-fcot aerial mast. . . . Suppose they didn't listen in in the afternoons? well, somebody would hear the message and go and tell them. . . . But would anyone else know where she was? . . . He wasn't going to spoil his afternoon for a badtempered old woman, anyway. He must get those things and have them to work on on Sunday. . . .

He went upstairs whistling loudly and into his bedroom. . . The sight of his bed made him think of the hospital . . . dangerously ill . . . and funny old Mrs. Muggs probably loved her just as much as mother loved Maggie, and she'd feel and look like mother looked when Maggie had diphtheria. . . .

Horace suddenly turned and tore down the stairs again. His mother had evidently gone down the road for some last-minute shopping. He snatched up his cap, rushed out of the house and just caught a bus going to Bromley. That would get him well

on the way to Chislehurst.

He climbed on top and suddenly his eye caught a garage sign: "Cars for hire day and night." He looked away again quickly and pulled his precious circuit diagram out. . . But he couldn't take it in somehow—the twisted lines became beds, and he saw fat Mrs. Muggs crying. . . . He got off impatiently at the next garage and went in.

"I want a car to Chislehurst—quick," he demanded.

The man looked him up and down.

"Who's paying?" he queried sceptically.

Horace pulled his five notes out of his coat pocket.

"I am-and look nippy," he said pom-

pously.

In five minutes there was a car ready for the road. Horace climbed in and then leant right back on the step with his hands on either side of the door. He had seen it done with great effect on the pictures. "Drive like—like Hades," he said be-

Drive like—like Hades," he said between his teeth, and getting in slammed the

door.

It rather spoilt the effect when the man had to get down from his seat again and inquire "Where to?"

"A farm-house just outside Chislehurst," Horace said, "and you'll know it because there's a fifty-foot aerial mast in the garden."

In the car Horace took his highly embellished metal case from his pocket and lit up. Then he leant back, crossed his legs and slipped his arm in the armstrap. He didn't get out the plan again. Instead he rehearsed several dramatic ways in which he would break the news to Mrs. Muggs. He felt that she would be overwhelmed with gratitude. . . .

But when they found the place at last Mrs. Muggs was quite near the gate looking for eggs and Horace simply tumbled out of the car and blurted out:

"You've got to come to your daughter—she's very ill—I heard it on the wire-less."

And without any sign of gratitude Mrs. Muggs in her turn blurted out:

"Where—which daughter? Oh, don't be a little fool! . . . Where?"

Horace could freely have hit her, but all he said was:

" Lt. George's Hospital. I came as quick as I could—and you can come back with me in this."

Mrs. Muggs went lumbering up the path to the house at a great rate and came back with the dusty plush hat all crooked and her coat over her arm. Her cousin was behind, and her manner made Horace feel a little less forlorn.

"I think it was very clever of you to come so promptly," she said. "How did you find it?"

"Mrs. Muggs told me you had a fifty-foot

aerial mast.'

"You're interested in wireless, then?" It was on the tip of Horace's tongue to tell her about the set and ask her about valves. . . . Then he remembered.

"Oh, a bit," he said airily, and they

were off—being driven at full speed to the

hospital.

Mrs. Muggs said very little on the drive except to make occasional guesses as to the accident that had befallen her daughter. She moaned at intervals and sniffed incessantly so that Horace longed to offer her his handkerchief.

They reached the hospital after what had seemed an endless journey and the doorporter immediately hurried Mrs. Muggs inside.

Horace turned to the driver.

"How much?" he asked, with a very

fair assumption of indifference.

"Two p'unds ten," the man said stolidly. Horace covered his gasp with a cough, then he counted out three notes into the man's hand, and with an airy gesture dismissed him.

"Don't worry about the change," he said largely. . . . He felt that that was the most worth-while moment of the whole affair.

Then he turned and noticed a flowerwoman at the hospital gates. . . . Muggs had gone in without any flowers. . . . It wasn't done—she'd feel awful going to her daughter with nothing in her hands.

The door-porter was sympathetic. Yes, if he got the flowers they'd be given to Mrs. Muggs—probably before she was allowed in to her daughter.

So Horace spent five shillings on an armful of rather wilted blooms. . . . he sat on a wooden seat to await Mrs. Muggs' return. . . . She probably hadn't any money with her, and anyway he might as well see her into her train back to Chislehurst.

He got out his precious circuit diagram to while away the time. Then he took a pencil out of his pocket and made some calculations on the back of the plan. . . . He put the pencil back in his pocket and carefully counted out his money.

Then he slowly refolded the diagram and replaced that, too. . . . He only sighed

once. . . .

"Anyway, it's a jolly good crystal set," he murmured sleepily. . . .

"And how is the valve set getting on?"

old Bennett asked on Monday.

Horace looked the other way. "I've changed my mind," he answered carelessly, "the old crystal set went so jolly well on Saturday."

Old Bennett had heard some part of the Saturday adventure from another source and, knowing his Horace, he was putting two and two together. Later on, Horace would receive full tribute, but Bennett was keen to see how much the boy would say.

"And what have you done with the

five pounds?" he asked.

Horace was silent for a moment, groping round for words sufficiently close to the truth, and, when he spoke, he himself did not know how very near to the truth he had

"Oh," he said elaborately, "I just invested that."

SUSAN WORE ROSES.

"SHE wore roses." That is all I heard of Susan at her ball.

Yet it was enchanting news: Roses-such compelling hues-

And Susan-be she shrew or sphinx, There's magic in that lovely minx.

When she dressed there must have been Rivalry 'twixt Queen and Queen,

Rose and rose: her whimsome face And the roses' blushing grace.

Winding in and out the dances, She gave thorns as well as glances,

And some sweetness, one supposes;— Susan at the ball wore roses.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.



"'What is your name?' he whispered hurriedly. The girl gave a start, and recovered herself.

'Gertrude, if you please, sir.'"

WEEK-END RETURNS

By W. PETT RIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURIE TAYLER

OUNG Mr. Chilham, in the lounge of his club, surveyed his diary with a frown. Here was Saturday morning, and it looked as though he would have to endure the ignominy of being seen in town during a summer week-end; the impression on the thoughtless could only be that his popularity was on the wane. The page brought a letter on a silver tray. Chilham, opening the envelope, found it contained nothing more than a lithographed communication applauding the virtues of Switzerland.

"One moment!" he said, with an inspiration, taking a telegram-form.

The three-forty from Victoria conveyed

him, and his bag. At half-past four he was outside Hayward's Heath station, inquiring for the car belonging to Mr. Westmore; the cabman offered to drive him to the address. It was in going along to Lindfield that Chilham caught sight of Mr. and Mrs. Westmore.

"You remember me," he cried argumentatively, on noting the blank expression of their features. "We met at Montreux last year. You were both of you so kind, when I had to leave, as to say, 'Come and look us up, some time.' And," he added, handsomely, "here I am!"

"But," remarked the young woman, puzzled, "we didn't give you our address!"

"Well," explained Chilham, "that I think was rather ingenious of me. Happened to see a note from you a while since in one of the papers on the National Theatre, or something of the kind. Jump in, both of you. Received my wire, I suppose?"

"We've been out since breakfast," said Westmore. He directed his wife to enter the carriage, and whispered to her; told Chilham to get out, assuring him the short walk would be excellent for his health, and

encouraging for an appetite.

Chilham found the pace set by his companion somewhat exacting, and he was breathless by the time they arrived at a small house with a lawn that went down to a low brick wall edging a large pond. It was all so different from the establishments usually visited for week-ends that he began to wonder whether he had perhaps been too impetuous.

"Hope I shall not be inconveniencing

you," he panted, at the doorway.

"I am sure you won't," responded his host. A bright-faced aproned maid with no cap came forward and took Chilham's hat and coat; he glanced at her. "But we are not sumptuous people, and you mustn't mind roughing it. Also we happen to be rather busy, and we may have to leave you, to some extent, to your own resources."

"Anything that's unconventional," declared Chilham, "suits me down to the ground. What's that?"

A sound of smashing crockery had come from within the small house; after a few

repeated.
"I wish sometimes," said Westmore thoughtfully, "that the wife could find some other means of expressing her annoyance with the servant. No wonder we find

seconds' interval, the alarming crash was

it difficult to keep one."

"You don't mean that the very quiet and well-mannered lady I met with you in Switzerland has such a frightful temper that..."

that——"

"You must do as I do," urged his companion. "Take no notice. Make no allusion to the circumstance. Here comes tea; I suppose we are to have it on the lawn."

The maid endeavoured to set the table on the sloping grass, and Chilham attempted to assist her; between them they contrived to allow the tray and its contents to slip, and toboggan down towards the pond. Mrs. Westmore came out of the house at the

moment the disaster occurred, and Chilham waited nervously for an explosion of annoyance. Her husband, searching pockets, said he had mislaid his tobacco-pouch, and sauntered into the house.

"I can't bear to hear breakages," mentioned the hostess, when the table had been refixed, and the articles that had escaped damage were restored. The maid hastened off. "The clatter seems to affect my head, and then I am a wreck for the whole of the

day.''

"And yet I remember up at Caux—"
"Ah," she interrupted, "that was at a time when I didn't know what nerves meant. You like your tea weak, I hope."

"As a matter of fact," admitted Chilham,

"I like it strong."

"Try to make this do," she begged, handing over a cup with a pale-looking beverage.

"You haven't been ill, I hope, Mrs. West-

more?"

She glanced around apprehensively before replying. Taking the sleeve of her blouse, she pulled it back shyly.

"Not a bruise!" he cried with alarm.

"I suppose no husbands are perfect," she remarked, drawing the sleeve down again. "The worst of it is that one never knows when the fits are coming on. At dinner, for instance, over the chestnut cutlets—— By the by, you are a vegetarian, aren't you?"

"Quite the reverse," he replied shortly.

"That's a pity. But as I was going to say: over some trifling incident that any other man would treat as a good joke, all self-control is suddenly lost, and if there happens to be a chair handy—" She shuddered. "I don't know why I should tell you of my troubles."

"But surely something can be done. Life is not worth living in the circumstances

you describe."

"There is always the water," she mentioned, gazing wistfully across at the pond. "The deep, pure beautiful water that will enable me to forget everything, everybody!" "Mrs. Westmore," he said resolutely,

"Mrs. Westmore," he said resolutely, "you must get all these thoughts out of your head at once. What you want is bright and cheerful society that will send the morbid ideas away. If you like, I'll have a good straight talk to your husband."

"Not if you value your own existence, Mr. Chilham. My own death I could face with perfect resignation, but yours I could not endure. And please don't let anything

I have said spoil the pleasure of your visit to us. I ought, perhaps, to have told you nothing, but when one is in the presence of a sympathetic mind, it is difficult to refrain from speech. Many in your position would,

I suppose, decline to stay in a house so infested with tragedy."

"I'm scarcely one of that kind," he said, manfully. "You have honoured me with your confidences, and I shall respect them. Until Monday afternoon,

someone here ready to protect you, and to see, for a space at any rate, that you are exempt from violence.'

"You have a noble disposition, Mr.

Chilham," she remarked admiringly. "Not at all!" said the young man,

pulling at his waistcoat.

"But some dear, good girl, surely, would weep bitterly if anything happened to you." The maid came out to take the tea-things away.

"If so," declared Chilham, "I can only declare myself ignorant of her name. My own impression is that she does not exist."



"Between them they contrived to allow the tray and its contents to slip, and toboggan down towards the pond."



Westmores he saw now, he congratulated himself on the discretion he had shown, and the fortune awarded to him. Thank goodness, he had remained a bachelor. The only drawback was that the fact exposed him to a certain anxiety in regard to weekends.

"I'll leave you," said Mrs. Westmore, rising. "This is Liberty Hall, and you can smoke anywhere on the lawn. One moment, though; which way is the wind blowing?"

It appeared that the fumes of Chilham's cigar would be carried across the pond.

"Mrs. Westmore came out of the house at the moment the disaster occurred."

It was soon afterwards that a confused rumble of voices came from the upper portion of the small house; he was not greatly disturbed because here evidently was an establishment where occurrences were always happening. Presently the voices became distinct. Chilham's features turned pale as the trend of the discussion reached him; he felt justified, in the circumstances, in walking up to the front door on tiptoe and remaining there, out of sight. Through another door he could observe the white arms of the young servant who was engaged in washing up the tea-things. He listened again; his suspicions were confirmed by a sentence that came from the room above. "The girl has no friends, no one will miss her," asserted Mrs. Westmore, with no attempt to lower her voice, "and there will be no inquiries. Anyone who can break three cups in one day deserves to be poisoned." Chilham found that all the chivalry he had expressed on behalf of the lady a few minutes earlier vanished. Across the pond he saw, near the Institute, the local policeman; it was difficult to judge an official at such a distance, but he appeared to Chilham not an individual upon whom one could rely in case of dire necessity. Chilham crept across to the kitchen.

"What is your name?" he whispered hurriedly.

The girl gave a start, and recovered her-

self. "Gertrude, if you please, sir."
"I don't mind," he remarked. "Have you the sense to trust me, and to do exactly what I tell you?"

"No, sir!" she answered.

"Gertrude, I want you to come along to the station at once. You must return to London with me. I have an aunt at Notting Hill who will look after you. Ask no questions; I shall explain everything as we go along. Can you manage to pack my suit-case for me?"

"It hasn't been opened," said the girl. "What a house!" he exclaimed. "What a house!"

"If you'll run down to the point where the 'bus stops," she remarked, "I can put on my cloak, and bring your case

along."

He found his hat and light coat; went along the pathway that skirted the pond. Away on the hill of the village, the omnibus was coming leisurely, and he shared his outlook between the conveyance and the direction of the house. Chilham found himself agonised by the thought that something might happen to Gertrude even in this brief space; he ought not to have left without her. The omnibus pulled up, and he implored the driver to wait a few minutes. The driver offered to give thirty seconds, and it was just as he prepared to release the brakes that the girl came in sight. Chilham ran forward and took the case; she seemed inclined, upon this, to return, but he held her arm, and compelled her to enter the conveyance. The omnibus started.

"You are rather dictatorial in your methods," she said, regaining breath. "I am not sure I feel particularly keen on

walking back from the station."

"Make some endeavour not to be a fool," he ordered sharply. "I explained it all to you only just now. You don't realise the frightful risks that are around you. If you hadn't left that house this evening, you would never have waked to-morrow morning."

"We are always a trifle late on Sundays."

"You and I are going to catch the sixtwenty-seven. I shan't feel that you are safe until we arrive at Victoria, Gertrude."

"By the by," she said, "what is your christian name?" He supplied the information. "I like it," she commented. What kind of a woman is your aunt?"

"This is the rottenest week-end I've ever had," he cried inconsequently. "It will be a warning to me not to visit people with whom I'm not well acquainted. And really you accept it all so calmly that I begin to doubt whether I'm wise in taking all this trouble about you. Can't you realise, my dear girl, that these two people are mad criminals? Can't you understand

"What class are you travelling?"

" First, of course."

"You are well-to-do, then?"
"Mustn't grumble," he replied. "The governor will take me into partnership later on, I suppose."

"Don't you trouble about my ticket at the station," she said. "I'll see to that. And now try to keep quiet, and compose your mind. Sit up at the other end of the 'bus, and close your eyes for a while."

On the platform she strolled up and down with him, speaking evenly, in the manner of one who desires to restore calm. Detecting a new refinement in her speech, he gave a challenging question. The train was coming

"No," she replied, "not always a servant. As a matter of fact, never. They'll rally me for telling you when I get back, but the truth is I am Mrs. Westmore's sister."

"That only makes the intended crime the

more horrible."

"And they are both busy writing people, you see; and when an uninvited guest comes along, they do all they can to put him off, and induce him to return quickly. Serves people right. They shouldn't take the casual invitation as serious."

He stepped into the compartment, and from there held her hand until the train started.

'Au revoir, Gertrude," he cried.

"A bientôt, Arthur," she said.





GOLD DUST

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

To the tinkle of sheep-bells Camilla made up her mind.

Seated on the close-cropped downland turf in the warm September sunlight, she clasped her hands around her expensively skirted knees, dug in the heels of her trim suède brogues, and vowed to the clouds and the woolly white flocks surrounding her that, come what might, she wouldn't be Married for Money.

Camilla had money—lots of it—because of a shrewd Scottish grandpapa who had foreseen the booming of rubber some seventeen years ago, and had recently died, leaving the whole of his resultant and carefully handled fortune to her. . . . She had also a little round face, freckles on a clear skin, a retroussé nose, and a pair of blacklashed, smoke-grey eyes—no conventional claims to being a beauty at all.

Camilla, realising this quite dispassionately, simply considered that it served to drive home the force of the case in point, emphasising the fact that she wasn't the lovely or the fascinating or the incomparable Camilla Drummond, but old Stair Mac-

Allister's grand-daughter, worth a cool half-

million, anyway.

Even down here in this quiet grey-green South Country there might be people who'd heard all about Grandfather MacAllister (or, at least, of "the MacAllister money"). . . . People one might like, but of whom one would never, never be quite sure. . . . People narrowing suddenly down to one young man with a gay blue glance, long legs of the kind that look well in breeches and gaiters, and a very, very obvious lack of worldly wealth. . . .

This was Brian Willoughby, agent and bailiff to the owner of the woolly white flocks grazing on the slope of downland where Camilla sat—owner, too, of the old black-and-white house in the broad vale below, the house that for two hundred years had been the home of the Willoughbys. . . .

Camilla did not know if Brian Willoughby had ever heard of Grandfather MacAllister; at all events, it was quite probable that he wouldn't connect "Camilla Drummond" with the inheritance of the MacAllister fortune. . . .

And there, to the tinkle of sheep-bells, she determined that Brian Willoughby's ignor-

ance should be preserved. . . .

He came tramping up over the close turf with two spaniels at his heels; and Camilla, mindful of her recent vow, secretly bewailed the unkind fate that had made her wear that new jumper suit that, even to the uninitiated, must surely belie a state of poverty. It had come from Paris, and she didn't think anyone would believe her if she suggested she'd made it herself... and then there were the thick hand-knitted silk stockings and fawn suède brogues matching the frock to a shade.... She hoped that Brian Willoughby might prove unobservant.

He wasn't. . . .

He came up to her and, after a moment, followed the spaniels' example by seating himself beside her on the turf.

"If I may—?" He smiled at her, and something in the quality of his smile set Camilla, so to speak, on guard—warned her, with a queer little shock, that Willoughby had entered the lists, or would enter them very soon—so that, at all costs, Grandfather MacAllister's cool half-million must be laid, a dark secret, away. . . .

He said simply:

"I hoped I'd see you this morning. . . . But—not like that. Is—anything the matter?"

She gave him a quick, half-startled glance. "No. What do you mean—'like that'?"

"So very, very solemn—and worried——"
"Oh!... But I'm not worried at all, thank you.... And mayn't I be 'solemn' sometimes? After all, you know—you've only known me a fortnight, haven't you?"

"Twelve days, to be exact..." he amended gravely. He looked away from her across the downs that lay fold upon fold beneath skimming cloud shadows, and the tinkling sheep-bells filled the silence that Camilla, with that new sense of being on guard, would not break.

"Last time we were here"—he went on slowly at last—"the day I showed you the dew-pond—you said you were keen on

horses—d'you remember?"

"Yes"—Camilla, relieved and surprised, turned a face glowing with quick enthusiasm for a subject in which they'd long since found a common interest. . . .

"The fact is—I was wondering if—if you knew anybody who would—and could—do a good turn for a pal of mine. . . . You see, it's like this. The poor beggar's had the most confoundedly rotten luck from the start—ever since he was demobbed he's been losing all the time. Not his fault—simply luck of the very worst—combined with the fact that until the war he'd always had money to burn. . . . He may have been a bit of an ass that first year—blued his gratuity in rather a hurry . . . but he was only a lad—and after four years in the trenches— Well, anyway, he's down and out. . . . All he's got—literally all he's got left—is a horse."

"A horse?" Camilla leant forward—remembering a quest of her own—a quest made fairly simple by Grandfather Mac-Allister's fortune; and forgetting for a moment that the fortune must be disclaimed.

"A horse. He wants to sell—or rather, he must sell. That's the trouble. He's had two offers—but—they've been influenced by the knowledge that he 'must,' and they're not fair, so he's holding out for something better. If he could have waited until the hunting season he'd have stood a good chance of getting his price—he'd have shown Rajah off in the field—he's a good rider, and knows how to make the best of a youngster. But that's hopeless. He couldn't possibly afford to wait two months—he couldn't afford to keep himself and Rajah—until then—let alone the expenses

involved in hunting at all. He's badly in debt as it is—at least," he flushed suddenly, "that may be squared. . . . But the fact remains that he's got to find—not a philanthropist exactly—but someone who'll give him a fair deal—someone who can afford to be generous over a deal I'll guarantee won't disappoint him. Rajah's a youngster, but he promises to be something more than first-class—if only there's someone sporting enough to give him a chance."

"I see," said Camilla gently.

She wanted to say: "Oh, I'm glad you came to me; I've been looking for a horse, and I'm sure Rajah would suit me. Will you ask your friend when I can see him—and what he wants for him?"

That is what she would have said—but for that vow made half an hour ago—a vow surely kept in remembrance by those tinkling sheep-bells. . . .

Instead, she sat very still, and waited, and after a pause Willoughby said slowly:

"I told you because I thought perhaps you might know of someone who'd consider the purchase. . . . You—I knew you'd understand."

She was desperately conscious of his glance on her averted face—knew that he was confident of her sympathy, hopeful of her power to help. . . . She sat with her hands on the turf beside her, leaning back a little, and found an absurd sort of satisfaction in pressing her palm on the prickles of a Carline thistle's dry brown star. . . .

"I'm sorry . . . I don't know of anyone . . . I wish I did . . . I wish I could help myself—but buying a horse "—in her own ears her little laugh rang oddly—" I'm afraid that's quite beyond my resources," she said. "I'm sorry, too," said Willoughby.

There was a subtle change in his voice that made her turn to look at him. For it seemed as though the three words hid far more than they conveyed. For the first time, he did not meet her eyes with that frank blue glance, gay yet sympathetic, to which she had grown strangely accustomed during those past twelve days. . . . After a pause he said slowly and diffidently:

"You see—I knew you rode—have hunted—because you spoke of a run—with

the Bellshires, wasn't it?"

Behind the slowness and diffidence Camilla thought she sensed an eagerness that sought to believe in the thing she had just denied, and the colour flamed and paled in her face at that suspicion. Had it not been for that she might, even then, have broken her morning's vow—taking the chance that great possessions had added. . . .

If only Brian Willoughby had not been poor—and if only she could forget Grandfather MacAllister's shrewd and worldlywise warning. . . . Out of a long silence came Willoughby's voice, low and insistent.

"Camilla!... Something is the matter!... If you would tell me....

Camilla!----"

With a tremendous effort Camilla laughed. "No—no. Nothing's the matter. It's only that I'm sorry—for your friend—and"—she laughed again—"for myself. You see—your speaking of that—reminded me—of what I can't do! That run with the Bellshires—that was most glorious luck. . . . They—friends of my grand-father's—were very kind—they lent me a horse. . . ."

She hated the half-truth of it almost more than a direct lie. It was true that on that particular occasion her mount had been lent her. . . . But it was also true that the horse had so pleased her that she had afterwards bought her . . . for two hundred and fifty . . . and that she was even now in Miss Drummond's stables . . . while her owner, down here in the South Country, sat in the honest September sunlight and sought to convince Brian Willoughby that her face was her fortune. . . .

And he had betrayed a wish to believe otherwise, and upon that belief had come very near to declaring that which he must not be allowed to declare until she was sure, until she had proved that that "cool half-million" did not weigh in the balance at all.

She went on speaking quickly.

"I would have written to them—the people who lent me Colleen that day . . . but I know they've gone abroad—probably won't be back in England this winter. . . . And there's no one else . . . no one." She repeated it almost defiantly as she rose to her feet, and, for the second time looking away, was aware of the keenness of Willoughby's glance as he followed her example.

She liked him . . . and the sheep-bells tinkled out a reminder of her vow. She

said:

"I wish I had money . . . to help people."

"That," said Willoughby, " is—like you."
But his voice was dull and hard. . . .

At Camilla's own request he told her the name of Rajah's owner.

"Just in case—I'm afraid it's the remotest chance—that I should hear of anyone . . ."

abode.

she explained, as their ways parted at the foot of the downs.

"Thank you," said Willoughby

gravely. . . .

Then abruptly he turned back.

"Miss Drummond! If you'd care to see Rajah . . . Robin's keeping him at a farm four miles across the downs-Friston way. It's a jolly walk—and I could go to-morrow -if—if you liked. . . ."

So it came about that Camilla attired herself in the oldest and shabbiest clothes she could find, and joined Brian Willoughby for that jolly walk across four miles of springy downland turf while the September dew lay thick and silver grey on the slopes yet untouched by the sun.

They climbed up from the valley by way of a steep and sunlit escarpment where the

Such a morning and such a walk and such good company than which, a week ago. Camilla would candidly have asked no better. But now she had to be continually on guard . . . lest by her chance careless word her squire should guess the truth she'd vowed he must not know.

This, as may be imagined, dimmed a little the pleasure of the journey; it seemed to Camilla that their friendship had taken a step backwards . . . and with something of relief she saw below the long red-brown roofs of the farm which Willoughby pointed present asRajah's



"Rajah's owner, Robin Fellowes . . . led out the colt for their inspection, and Camilla gave a little cry of delighted admiration."

downland flowers embroidering the closebitten turf-eyebright and thyme and hairbell and sheep's bit and pink starred centaury and golden trefoil making a patterned carpet over which the bees thronged. And over all a blue sky with puffs and fleeces of white cloud.

Rajah's owner, Robin Fellowes—a curlyhaired young man with worried lines on a pleasant, open countenance-led out the colt for their inspection, and Camilla gave a little cry of delighted admiration. Beyond the obvious picture that Rajah made in the morning sunlight, his gallantly carried head and the glossiness of his dark bay coat, she could admire intelligently the merits of his clean limbs and deep shoulders, the muscles that rippled in action under the satin skin. . . .

Here was a horse that she would have been glad to buy-for which she would willingly have paid a generous price in order

"'He's a beauty, Mr. Fellowes. I only wish I could afford to buy him. . . . Of course, if I hear of anyone likely, I'll let you know. . . . '"

that this pleasant-faced, unlucky boy might benefit. And the irony of it was that her hand was tied—all because she had vowed she wouldn't be married for money, because Brian Willoughby had shown that he would enter the lists—and Brian Willoughby was poor. . . .

So she stood there, unhappily conscious of that sorry mixture of pride and anxiety in Robin Fellowes' eyes; conscious of Rajah's merits and her own ability to pay for them ten times over; conscious, more than all, of

Brian Willoughby, standing stiffly erect by the stable door . . . watching her.

Once again she wanted to say frankly and freely:

"I think he'll suit me. What are you asking...?" To come to terms that would be generous to the boy with whom she sympathised, to go home and write him a cheque... knowing that Brian Willoughby was of those who could be glad for a friend's good fortune.

But she only said, in a quiet little voice:

"He's a beauty, Mr. Fellowes. I only wish I could afford to buy him.... Of course, if I hear of anyone likely, I'll let you know...."

When Robin Fellowes thanked her she did not dare, somehow, to look at Willoughby.

The four miles home seemed very long, although the glory of the autumn morning had not dimmed. She knew that Willoughby was making conversation in a way that he had never done before . . . all those twelve days. And the significance of his changed attitude crept, a cold suspicion, into her heart.

When three days had gone by Camilla knew

that the test she had applied had succeeded.

Willoughby, aware of her poverty, meant to withdraw from the lists . . . that quick sympathy and understanding, that frank and honest bearing, hid all the ignoble qualities of a deliberate mercenary. During those three days they met but once . . . and conversed with the polite and airy brilliance of a French phrase-book.

On the fourth day, preceded by a brief message, Camilla went alone to the farm

four miles across the downs.

To Robin Fellowes she said quietly:

"I wanted to think it over—I mean about buying Rajah. Now I have made up my mind. . . . I should like to try him, of course. . . ."

Rajah's owner looked dazedly at the slim figure standing in boyish (and very smart) riding kit before him, and Camilla smiled (for the first time in three days).

Half an hour later she sat at the table in the farm-house parlour, cheque-book in hand, and Robin Fellowes was stammering in bewildered gratitude.

"But I say—you know.... You mustn't.... I mean—I'm not asking

Camilla calmly filled in the cheque and signed it... With a charming tact she laughed away the boy's protestations.

"You mustn't insult Rajah, Mr. Fellowes.
... I'm sure he knows what he's

worth. . . ."

Robin Fellowes confided in her impul-

sively.

"I—it means rather a lot to me, you know. I want to make a start-I've the offer of a job in East Africa. I'm goin' to work and pay back old Willoughby one You don't know what a brick he's been to me, Miss Drummond. Got me out of no end of a hole . . . paid my debts -although he jolly well couldn't afford it. . . . It's rotten enough for him-when you remember the old place has been his family's for generations—and now he's bailiff to the soapboiler who calls it 'my little place in Sussex. . . . ' But he's always been keen on the job-said at least he can still look after the land. I don't know what's happened, but yesterday when I saw him he said he thought of chucking it and throwing in his lot with me abroad."

"Oh!" said Camilla dully. Suspicion mocked: "He wouldn't have thought of going if you hadn't told him you were poor." She rose from the table quickly as if to escape that mocking echo. . . .

"He can't be altogether hateful or he

wouldn't do that for his friend."

Only when she saw the amazed indignation in Robin Fellowes' face did she realise that she had spoken the words aloud. . . . She

gave an odd little laugh, and before he could answer her began making arrangements in connection with Rajah. . . . Let Robin Fellowes think what he liked . . . it did not matter much. . . .

She knew that it would be only a matter of hours before Brian Willoughby learnt of her purchase of Rajah for a sum that was more than "generous." She told herself that she hoped he would realise and appreciate the lesson she had endeavoured to teach him. She did not think that even he would have the base effrontery to seek her out now. The very least he could do would be to go away and never see her again.

Yet that afternoon saw her once more seated on the summit where browsed the self-same woolly flocks that had witnessed her vow. . . . There was a track here used almost exclusively by sheep, the postman, and the soapboiler's bailiff.

One cannot think that Miss Drummond had any particular desire for the society of the postman. . . .

She wore the Paris jumper suit of expen-

sive simplicity.

At four o'clock Brian Willoughby was returning from his employer's errand. . . . He said, without preface:

"I've seen Robin. He's very, very grateful. . . ."

Camilla said:

"I had to. I just had to. I couldn't let him perhaps lose his chance of—of everything simply because—because—"

"Because you did not want me to know that you had the money?" Willoughby's voice was very quiet, but some note in it stung the colour into Camilla's face. She lifted her head and looked at him . . . and it seemed as if the man whom she had thought she had proved a mercenary could make her feel ashamed. . . .

"I knew all the time," said Willoughby.

"I knew of your grandfather's fortune—and that you had inherited it. Those first days when we——" He broke off quickly.

"Then suddenly you changed. I didn't understand at first—and then I realised—when you were so anxious for me to believe you weren't—rich—why you were doing it. I was a fool—I tried to make you give it up—because I cared so much—Camilla! I thought you knew that! But you couldn't trust me. . . ."

In the silence that followed the sheepbells tinkled and tinkled. They tinkled to Camilla of her bitter folly in letting suspicion and distrust blight the honest sunlight.... Why hadn't she known that the gay blue glance (only it wasn't particularly gay just now) was not the glance of the mercenary her unhappy mind had conjured up?

"Robin Fellowes said you were going away. . . You mustn't! Brian! It

was because I cared, too_____'

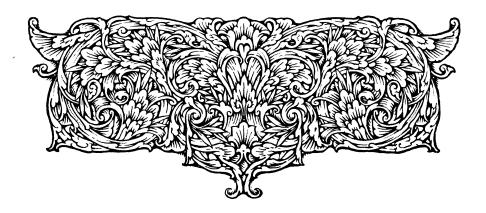
He interrupted her harshly.

"There's nothing else to be done. How could I come to you—now—with that between us? Knowing that you'd believed—might still believe—that of me?"

Camilla looked at him with wide grey

eves.

"I think—if you still cared," she said very slowly, "that you would even care enough to forget that. Because you are you. . . ."



BETTY TAKES THE AIR.

WHEN little Betty drives abroad,
The other chauffeurs yield the road—
So slight a maid, so vast a car,
They gape and wonder where they are,
And who has waved the enchanter's wand
Here in the busy, teeming Strand.

How like a slender queen she sits, Erect, alert in all her wits, Wide brow, grave eyes of candid grey Intent upon the devious way, And yet, for all her regal air, So sweet, so frank, so debonair!

The purring giant seems to feel Her guiding hand upon the wheel— The shapely hand flung out to show This is the way she means to go, Delighting in the swift and strong, Yet careful of the humble throng.

Ah, Betty, with your youthful grace,
Spring's very soul shines in your face!
The soft west wind is in your mien,
Half innocent child, half royal queen,
As, all unconscious of your art,
You drive your monster through my heart.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY

MR. DUMPHRY'S CARAVAN HOLI-DAY

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LENDON

HY is it," asked Mr. Dumphry almost imperiously, as he filled VV his glass with port after the Sunday midday meal, "why is it that we do not eat more nuts?"

"I do," said Queenie, "lots more than

"Admitted," said Mr. Dumphry with magnanimity. "I am not defending myself. When I was your age I also was fond of nuts. As we reach middle-life we neglect them. We are omitting a very valuable article of diet. And I ask myself why."

"Teeth mostly," said Mrs. Dumphry. "I never touch a nut. Couldn't digest it

if I did."

"We don't try to digest them."

"But, Ernest dear, digestion is not a matter of trying. I once read a statement —I cannot remember where it was, or when it was, but to the best of my belief it was by a medical man—that digestion depends to a great extent on the digestive juices."

"Yes, yes. No doubt. But that difficulty has already been met. For a small sum you can purchase a nut-mill. grind up the nuts, mix them with honey, and make sandwiches with brown bread. Sustaining and appetising."
"Poof!" said Queenie. "Sounds per-

fectly filthy."

"Too strong in your language, Queenie," said her mother. "At the same time I am not sure that I could fancy a nut-sandwich myself."

"Take the chestnut," continued the lecturer. "The chestnut is a perfect food. One of the national dishes of Italy, polenta, is composed of chestnut flour and milk."

"Best roasted," said Queenie, "and a

woodfire for choice. And you want a boy or two to peel them for you, as they get too hot to touch. The smell's the best part of

"And again," said Mr. Dumphry, "there's the question of economy. I suppose that the price of nuts compared with the price of meat is—well, pence compared with shillings, isn't it?"

"I couldn't say, dear," said Mrs. Dumphry. "You have to consider which goes furthest and how much of a thing is waste. I do know that good nuts cost much more now

than they did in my young days."
"And besides," said Queenie, with the air of one who clinches the argument, "nuts

have no gravy."

"Really now, Queenie," said her father, "that is beside the point. It was the economic side of which I was speaking. I am aware that nuts do not yield gravy. I never in my wildest moments supposed that they did. I never said that they did. However, I put no compulsion on anybody. I shall probably make a few experiments on myself. If successful, you may care to join me."

Barbara was away. Elsa, her married sister, was week-ending. So Queenie took counsel with her best friend—that very wise and quite pretty serpent, Eileen Thompson. As they walked out together, Queenie said:

"I don't get much peace. Either somebody has been talking to father or he's read something in a book."

"But what difference does it make?"

"To start with, he's going to eat nuts." "Why shouldn't he if he likes them?" "He don't. I think he hates them. But

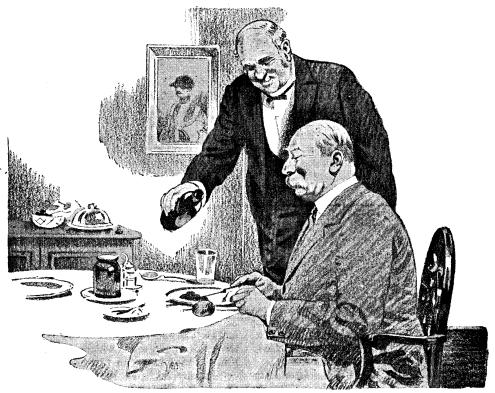
you know what he is-he'd eat bricks if it

were a question of principle with him. Nuts are only the beginning—but they're the beginning of the end."

"Still don't see," said Eileen.
"Don't you? Well, I do. I've seen cases before. It starts, say, with fruitarian diet, but it don't stop there. There are lots of other things tied on to it. Next week he'll stop wearing hats, and that will ruin his business. He'll start a long beard, which will be perfectly hateful. He'll make us do folk-dances in the studio and perhaps put up a May-pole. He'll buy an old-world come every one of them with enthusiasm." "What for?"

"Silly! To show you're not prejudiced. Then when the development begins to take practical form, put every spoke into the wheel that you can think of. Mr. Dumphry may sometimes think a thing will work when it won't, but he never thinks a thing is working when it ain't."

"No," said Queenie definitely. "That line's shut off. Too sub rosa and sotto voce. I can tell him what I think, even to the point when I'm squashed for cheek. Can't



"At 3 p.m. he was eating cold beef and pickles, with beer and enjoyment, in a neighbouring restaurant,"

copper door-knocker, representing a scorpion with the spasms, and make the very postman laugh. He'll buy mother a jibbeh handembroidered by Russian peasants, and he'll cut down my heels by two inches. He'll become a socialist and lose every friend he's And we shall end by chicken-farming in a Garden City with no drains and attending lectures on Poushkin and Gogol."

Eileen laughed joyously.

"It's exaggeration and it won't happen, of course. But I see what you're getting at—there may be developments. Suppose there are. If you don't like them, then weltell him I think what I don't. Even if I tried it, I should muck it."

"There's no question of any deceit," said Eileen, "because it could all be explained afterwards."

"I know," said Queenie. "Still things are like that. And if I go plugging through the mud of the Garden City in sandals in search of the new-laid, well then, I plug. But it may not come to that. This simple life is a terribly complicated business, and you never know which way the cat's going to jump."

On the following evening Mr. Dumphry

brought home with him in his dispatch-case one nut-mill, one jar of alleged honey, and one large bag of nuts, some with kernels to them.

On Tuesday morning the nut-sandwiches were prepared. There might have been more of them if there had been more time. At 1 p.m. Mr. Dumphry lunched in his office on nut-sandwiches and a glass of water. He found the sandwiches were pleasing, and was delighted to observe that he had saved at least thirty minutes of valuable time. At 2 p.m. he discovered that either there should have been more sandwiches or some suitable supplement should have been provided. At 3 p.m. he was eating cold beef and pickles, with beer and enjoyment, in a neighbouring restaurant.

He admitted as much in his own special

way when he returned home.

"No doubt they required some small supplement, as I expected they would. But that can be arranged for the future. No, I won't have them to-morrow. At my time of life in breaking through a confirmed habit it is far better to do it gradually."

And in the following week the second development took place. The weather was distinctly warm and Mr. Dumphry became an advocate for fresh air.

"Well," said Queenie, "I have all my

windows open every night."

"That's nothing," said Mr. Dumphry.
"To-night I shall have the camp-bed put
out on the lawn and I shall sleep on it."

In spite of remonstrances from Mrs. Dumphry he did so. He retired to rest at 10.30. At or about 11.30, as he was just getting off, a stray cat jumped on his face, spat, and retired quickly. This was upsetting. It was not until an hour later that the cat, being apparently a creature of habit, returned and repeated the process. It was not until one o'clock that the storm actually broke. It was a good storm with plenty of rain in it. It woke Queenie and she was kind enough to come down in her dressinggown and help her father to get the soaked camp-bed through the library window. Mr. Dumphry was grateful. It was just a stroke of bad luck, he explained. It did not affect the main argument.

On the following morning he said that our climate was so versatile and our cats were so frequent that it would probably be better to construct some kind of a shed, the front of the shed being entirely open except for wire netting to exclude cats. "That's just about the same as if you slept in your room with the windows open," said Queenie, and was immediately told by her mother to hush.

On the two next days nut-sandwiches were demanded with certain necessary supplements. Otherwise for about a week there was no symptom whatever of the simple life. Mr. Dumphry appeared to have forgotten his idea of a sleeping-shed and nobody ever reminded him. It was not till the next week that the yearning towards the simple life reappeared, perhaps in its very fiercest form.

"I have decided," said Mr. Dumphry in his simple manly way one evening, "that this year we will make a change in the August holiday. For years past we have been down to Helmstone always. The hotel is comfortable, friends of ours are also staying at Helmstone. Very good. Very nice. But where is the change? The whole point of a holiday lies in the change. Helmstone I am waited on as I am here. Very pleasant no doubt, but at the same time radically wrong. We have to break away from all that. We have to learn to do things for ourselves. Out in the forest, away from the haunts of man, living as the primitive man lived. That is health. That is invigoration."

"Yes," said Mrs. Dumphry doubtfully. "I don't think I quite understood, dear, what it was you were going to suggest."

"We will have a caravan holiday. We will roam through the New Forest. We shall be absolutely free, with no restriction of any kind. We can stay when we like, we can move on again when we like."

"Unless the caravan wheels get up to the axles in the mud, which happens some-

times, I'm told," said Queenie.
"It may be. We have only to use our

discretion. What is mud? We see it, we know that it is there, we merely avoid putting our caravan into it. What could be more simple? The fact is that we have become the slaves of custom. We do the same thing every year. Every year we go to the same hotel at the same seaside place and meet much the same people. So narrow. So soul-destroying. We want to break away—to use our originality. Roaming in the wilds of the New Forest we shall see flowers, and birds, and beasts that are not to be found at Helmstone. We shall get in closer touch with nature."

"Some ways it might be rather a lark," Queenie admitted. "We shan't see any of our friends though."

"We shall enjoy their society the more on our return."

Mrs. Dumphry's brow had become over-

cast with thought.

"There is just one point, Ernest," said Mrs. Dumphry. "Of course if your mind is set on a caravan holiday, then we must all join in and make the best of it. But for a caravan holiday it is surely necessary to have a caravan, and we have not got one."

"Well, I might hire one. But these things are expensive to hire and it would probably be more practical to buy one outright. At the end of the holiday I could probably sell it again for about as much as I gave for it. Or if you became fascinated with the life, as is very probable, I should keep it and let it when we were not using it ourselves. Only yesterday I heard of a man who bought a caravan in that way, and in three years he had got back what he paid for it by letting it when he did not want it himself. I have said nothing about it, and it is not the first consideration with me, but as a matter of fact the economy of a caravan holiday as compared with a hotel holiday is enormous. I might," he added humorously, "almost be tempted to declare a dividend at the end of it.

The discussion which followed left Mrs. Dumphry disquieted. Ernest asserted that he himself would do all the rough work of the caravan. But, so far as she knew, Ernest had never done any rough work; and when, in seasons of domestic crisis, a chance came for him to do some, he invariably shirked it. To Mrs. Dumphry herself the cooking had been assigned. And, given the usual range or gas-stove, she could cook. But of the oil-stove she had a profound distrust. She had never cooked with one. And she had a deep-seated conviction that in the first five minutes one invariably turned the wrong tap, and the whole thing blew up and wrecked the surrounding neighbourhood. They were to take it in turns to drive the caravan, and Mrs. Dumphry knew that all horses—even the gentlest—had a spite against her. Ernest wished it, and with Mrs. Dumphry that was conclusive. But she viewed her approaching holiday with depression.

Queenie was more hopeful. In many ways she would have preferred to be with her friends at Helmstone. But with a caravan there was always the possibility of a lark. Every caravan was rich in its possibility of a humorous breakdown. And at any

rate it had for her the charm of novelty. She greeted the unseen cheerfully.

"The only trouble," said Mr. Dumphry in his final peroration, "is that I may have left it too late. I should have started to secure my caravan a month or two ago. I am told that at this time of the year for every caravan that becomes available there are at least twenty people waiting. However, I shall keep my eyes open and do my best."

On the following Friday he returned home a little earlier than usual, interested even

to the point of excitement.

"I have found," he said proudly, "what seems from the advertisement to be exactly what we want. It is the caravan 'Ixion,' standing at present in the yard of the Rose Inn at Little Perribrook, all ready to take the road. I have sent word that I may be expected down to-morrow."

He had already made researches in the time-tables. And it was necessary for him to leave the house not later than 7.15 a.m. on Saturday morning. His sandwiches and flask were prepared in advance. They were ham sandwiches, which was a little curious seeing that there were still so many muts in the house.

Everything went well with him. He had had a moment's doubt as to whether he would be able to catch the local train at the junction. He got it handsomely. He also found on inquiry that the local train always waited for the main line. It was just about noon that Mr. Dumphry walked into the yard of the Rose Inn and saw immediately before him the caravan "Ixion."

It looked very neat and smart. It was painted yellow, and every piece of metal on it shone brightly. It was from the outside exactly Mr. Dumphry's conception of what a caravan should be. He went up the steps and knocked at the front door.

The door was opened by a rather nice-looking young man of about twenty. He wore a well-cut grey flannel suit, white shoes, and a white canvas shirt open at the neck. His face was tanned, his very fair hair was a little too long, his blue eyes looked plaintive.

"Good morning," said Mr. Dumphry cheerfully. "I think you've had a letter from me—my name is Dumphry."

"Yes, yes. That's right. Come in, Mr. Dumphry. By the way, my name is Kidd—it's not given in the advertisement. It is really an extraordinary thing. The advertisement went in only on Friday morning

and you're the third man who's been down to see the little box."

"You've not sold it yet?" asked Mr.

Dumphry with a shade of anxiety.

The young man shrugged his shoulders. "I can hardly say," he said. "It depends whether I accept one of the two offers that have already been made. However, let me show you round."

And for half an hour he exhibited to Mr. Dumphry the numerous clever contrivances with which the caravan was stocked. It had no appearance of being crowded, and yet there was not an inch of waste space in it. All glass and china were so well secured that even the jolting on a bad road

could not injure them. The three bunks looked most comfortable, and there was a sleeping-tent which would accommodate Mr.

"Well now," he said, "we come to the business side. Suppose you come and lunch with me in the inn here, and we talk things over."

"Delighted," said the young man. "Thank you very much. The landlord of the inn doesn't love me exactly."

"Indeed? Why is that?"

"Well," said the young man, "I don't take one of his bedrooms. And as a rule I cook my own meals in the caravan. Yes, it's quite natural."

Certainly the landlord, who greeted Mr. Dumphry with the utmost politeness, had only a short grunt in return for Mr. Kidd's salutation. The luncheon was of the simplest kind, but Mr. Kidd seemed to enjoy He also said that he liked the beer, and gave one no reason whatever to disbelieve him.

When it came to business Mr. Kidd said



"Mr. Dumphry found himself unable to offer more than £90."

be exactly the caravan of which Mr. Dumphry had dreamed, but he was too wily to say so just yet.

its fittings, and it was worth more. Mr. Dumphry found himself unable to offer more than £90.

"Oh, very well," said the young man, in his youthful impulsive way. "Call it £90. After all, you're a sport, and the other two men who wanted it weren't. Give me £90 for it and it's yours right now."

"No," said Mr. Dumphry, "I shall want

France. But Wednesday's not such a very long time to wait."

And, this business being concluded, Mr. Dumphry caught his train home. He had a very bright and joyous story to tell his family on his arrival. He maintained that



first of all to test it on the road to see if the springs are all right and so on. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll pay you a 10 per cent. deposit now, for which you will give me a proper acknowledgment, and I'll complete next Wednesday if I find the caravan satisfactory on the road. Will that suit you ? "

Oh, yes," said Mr. Kidd. "I'd sooner finish to-day because I want to get over to

went to the inn to inquire of the landlord.

"Kidd?" said the landlord meditatively. "Kidd. Might you be meaning the young man that had lunch with you here last week?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dumphry. £81 for him here. I bought his caravan, you know."

"Did you?" said the landlord slowly. "That's a pity. His real name's Jameson. He left here early Sunday morning. It never was his caravan. He hired it for a month from Captain Egremont, and never paid a penny of rent for it either, so I'm told. I never took to him myself. Captain Egremont was down here on Monday and took the caravan away with him. Lots of swindlers about nowadays, aren't there?"

Mr. Dumphry tried to look cheerful. "There are, indeed," he said, tapping his pocket-book. "And I'm glad to say that Mr. William Kidd, or Jameson, or whatever his name is, hasn't got my money."

"Yes, indeed, sir," said the landlord.
"It's a let-off for you. £81, that's a lot to

lose."

And Mr. Dumphry reflected that even £9 was more than he had absolutely wanted to

give away.

It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Dumphry's story was quite perfect by the time that he reached home. He said there seemed to be some dispute as to the ownership of the caravan, and in the circum-

stances he felt it would not be safe for him to buy it.

"Then I suppose," said Mrs. Dumphry, "you'll have to begin all over again? By the way, I had a letter from the Grand Hotel at Helmstone this morning asking if they should reserve our rooms for us as usual."

"Well," said Mr. Dumphry, "I think on the whole you'd better write and tell them to do so. The time left is so short now that I couldn't depend on finding another caravan to suit us. We shall do better next year."

And while Mrs. Dumphry conveyed the glad news to the rest of her household, Ernest went into the library and took down a volume of the Encyclopædia. He had a vague idea that he remembered that name. He found that Captain William Kidd had been hanged for piracy in the year 1701.



AUGUST.

THE stillness and the noonday heat,
The shadow of the hillside firs

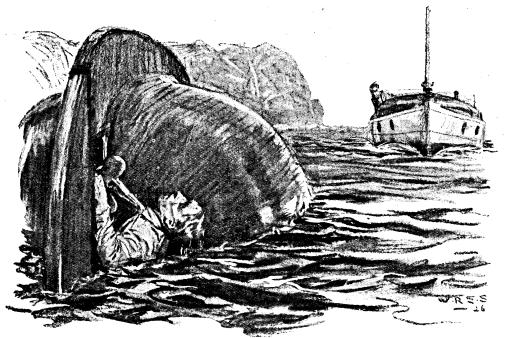
Across the water merge and meet;
No breeze the placid water stirs.

A fish jumps up to catch a fly,
The ripples widen, then all's still.

A yaffle calls his laughing cry,
A willow-wren her rhythmic trill,

And you and I beside the stream
Lazily in the long grass dream.

KATHLEEN M. M. FORDHAM.



"When they found him he hung by the wrists, his head above water most of the time, his face against the hull."

SECOND SIGHT

By PHILIP BURTON

ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT

T is a fashion of this age to express a ready belief in the supernatural. There was not a person in the old dining-room of Tarrington Manor that Friday evening who did not "know" that Helen Trevithick was the possessor of second sight. Old Colonel Coad, the Dallases, Mrs. Perowne—everyone; they had always known it, had always told their friends. "Extraordinary, isn't it?" they had said. "And her mother's the same, you know. Runs in the family." And when it happened, when Helen's accepted abnormality suddenly put their easy belief to the test, none of them, saving Mrs. Trevithick and possibly John Tremain, could muster more than a shocked and unhappy incredulity.

It had been a day of surprises at the Manor. Tremain had mentioned casually at break-fast that he had written asking Helen and her mother over for the week-end. Here and there round the table eyebrows showed a tendency to rise. "Helen Trevithick, eh?" his hearers thought. "One wouldn't think . . . No harm in asking her, of course, but in the circumstances . . ." They all agreed, when they discussed the matter later, that she wouldn't come.

Everyone knew that Helen had been

Everyone knew that Helen had been passing through what gossip styled "A pretty thinnish sort of time." The women, for the most part, were inclined to give her mother the discredit. It was a mistake, they said, to be too hard. . . . Mrs. Trevithick, male opinion had it, was absolutely right. Who was this Mansfield fellow, in any case? Some sort of writing blighter. Cornwall was stiff with them latterly. They always managed to make trouble.

Helen had first met Jimmy Mansfield the preceding summer. Polverris, on the hill above whose tiny harbour the Trevithicks' house was built, has a delightful habit of extending hospitality, though not without the exercise of some discrimination, towards its summer visitors. Mansfield, young, not ill-looking, pleasant-mannered and, as his recent novel showed, indubitably clever, found he had fallen among friends. three weeks of the arrival of his little yacht, the Kittiwake, he had been dined at all the big white houses on the hill; had fed less formally with the whole artist colony, whose members hid in obscure lairs within the labyrinthine fishing village. And he was tacitly enrolled a member of that pleasant company of youth which, in the matters of bathing, tennis, dancing and the multifarious pursuit of summer pleasure, had always looked to Helen for the lead.

Of course, Polverris talked. At first, when Mansfield was no more than a name added to the list of Helen's friends, it talked from habit. Later, when it would seem the list, for every practical purpose, had been reduced to one, and that one Helen's Jimmy, it speculated on the dates of the announcement and the wedding. And in the end, being a kindly place, and fond of Helen, it shook a puzzled head, and sighed. . . .

Mrs. Trevithick had been conscious of dislike for Mansfield from the start. She tried, at first, to reason with herself, but that availed her nothing. The feeling was essentially unreasoning; it was instinctive—and ineradicable. For the first time since they had come to Polverris—that was ten years ago, after Trevithick died in Tarrington—she found herself at variance with Helen; and as, despite her efforts, she felt the gap begin to widen between her and her daughter, her first dislike for Mansfield turned to something hardly less acute than hate.

It was in the early spring, at the end of a winter through which the effort of being pleasant to Mansfield had been a daily penance, that Mrs. Trevithick's restraint gave way. Utterly unexpectedly, during some trivial altercation that she later recalled with puzzled self-reproach, she let slip a sentence that tore the veil from everything she had hidden. . . .

Jimmy Mansfield came no more to the house on the hill. Less and less frequently he and Helen met elsewhere. And in June he stowed his belongings on board the little yacht that had brought him nearly a year before, and sailed to Tregissey, ten miles farther west along the coast.

Helen, of course, was extremely cheerful,

entirely unconcerned. But the cheerfulness that goes with loss of colour and appetite, with absence of mind and distaste for former enthusiasms, is not the sort a mother cares to provoke. If Mrs. Trevithick was worried before, she was doubly worried now. For over a month she lay awake at night and goaded herself towards a decision. And because her pity for Helen was definite and intelligible, while her dislike of Mansfield was something that even to herself she could not explain, she finally chose surrender.

"Helen," she said one morning, while she arranged some flowers on the mantel-piece, and kept her back to her daughter, "why don't you write to Jimmy, and get him to come over here for a bit? We could easily put him up. We never see him since he went to Tregissey."

he went to Tregissey."

Helen went white. "Oh, mother," she said, in a sort of wounded exasperation.

And then, with an effort, "Thank you for being a darling. But you mustn't worry yourself. . . ."

It was a day or two after this that the letter from Tarrington came. Mrs. Trevithick read it at breakfast, frowned, sighed and hesitated. Impossible to write a refusal without consulting Helen. And yet—it seemed so heartless to suggest she'd care to go. "If only," Mrs. Trevithick thought, "she didn't know I'd always hoped that she and John . . . You never ought to let them know. Nellie was just as foolish with her boy. She said something to John before she died. It drove them apart when they grew up, the knowledge." "Helen." she said aloud, and passed the sheet of notepaper across the table, "here's one from John. It's rather inconvenient. I'm afraid. with the Bunts coming down this month, and then the garden. . . ."

But Helen had already started on her sequence of surprises. She looked up from the letter with a smile that was at last spontaneous. "The Bunts!" she said. "Mother! You know they bore you stiff. And Aaron always gardens at his best when we're away. It's simply ages since we were at Tarrington. . . ."

They telephoned acceptance, had their bags ready by the time John's car arrived.

In the old dining-room, that in the Oak Age had been a banquet hall, had known the staider ritual of Victorian dinners, when all was ponderous mahogany and engravings from Sir Edwin Landseer's pictures, had been degraded in the time of Edward to the use of billiards, and lastly been

denuded of all save its perfect floor, they were engaged in dancing to the gramophone.

A fox-trot ended with the Whiteman flourish. Hugh Dallas, leaving Helen, went across the room in a running slide, stretched out an arm towards the machine, whose needle whined and clicked in the last groove of the record. John, disengaging Mrs. Perowne, turned with a laughing plea for an encore; and simultaneously everyone broke off speech midway, and caught his breath.

Helen was standing alone at the end of the room, her figure in sharp relief against the wainscoting. Her arms hung limp at her sides, and her face, that was tilted up to the light, was frozen, unearthly, white to the lips. For a matter of seconds there was no sound in the room. Her hands went up to her breast. "Oh," she breathed; and then, in a whisper that filled the room with articulate pain, "Jimmy!"

John and her mother were at her side in an instant. The others relaxed. They were waiting for Mrs. Trevithick to speak of nerves and bed and aspirin, waiting for her to bring the situation down from the dizzy emotional level of a moment before.

She caught her daughter's arm. "Helen! What is it?"

"It's Jimmy. He's dying—drowning. He looked right at me, out of the water. His lips were moving. They were all blue. And oh"—she shut her eyes and caught her breath with a sob—"his hands kept slipping...."

The face that Mrs. Trevithick turned to Tremain was as white as Helen's. "John!" she cried, and turned from her daughter to catch at his shoulder with both her hands. "John, it's true. It's always true. Oh, can't we do something?"

Tremain nodded. His voice, when he spoke to Helen, hid urgency under deliberate gentleness. "Try to remember, Helen. You spoke of his hands. What were they holding on to?"

Her words came slowly. "A rock, I think. But I'm not sure. . . . A black, hump-backed, slippery thing. But it seemed to move——"

"That's the keel of his yacht," said Tremain grimly, and started snapping out orders that drove his guests to a dazed activity.

Three minutes later Helen was scrambling into the car, and Dallas was forcing in on top of her the blankets he had torn from his bed. "For Heaven's sake be careful, Tremain," he panted. "It isn't only your own

neck you're risking, you know. The whole thing's mad——"

Inside the hall they could hear the colonel shouting into the telephone, cursing Trunks with a self-conscious pretence of impatience

Tremain tossed goggles into Helen's lap as they started. "Put 'em on now," he said. "No wind-screen. Been stripping the car for a flutter at Brooklands, at the August Meeting. And sit as tight as you can for the next ten minutes or so. We're going to seem pretty like crashing, most of the time, but we aren't going to crash—"

The party that watched at the doors gasped or swore beneath its breath as it saw the car take the gates at the Lodge.

Huddled beside Tremain, Helen sent her thoughts racing ahead of the car to Tregissey. Eleven miles. And you had to go through Tarrington, with its ten-mile limits. Then six miles—was it?—of open moor to Penhallow, and three tortuous, switchback miles of narrow lane to Tregissey. Getting a boat at Tregissey would mean explanation, delay. And even now his hands were slipping. . . .

Already, as the car jumped into its stride along the level mile to Tarrington, Helen was glad of the goggles. The air, that had seemed so warm and gentle a minute before, developed a sting as it sang in her face; seemed, when the car smote through the dusty wake of a tradesman's van, to be full of red-hot needles. The van leaped backwards at them out of the dust, gave what sounded a single rattling cough as it passed; then they were back on the crown of the road again, and the purr of the engine slid down an octave as Tremain eased up for Tarrington.

They were in the High Street now, threading a serpentine way through startled traffic. Tremain was keeping his thumb on the switch of the horn, and the insolent roar was taking effect. Far ahead of them cursing drivers were pulling their horses in to the left—with a deliberate, obstinate slowness, it seemed to Helen.

"Oh," she cried to herself, "but we're crawling, crawling." She peered through goggles misty with tears of impatience at the speedometer. It registered thirty-three. . . .

They were out of the town at last. Once, where two farm wagons had double-banked in a narrow street, Tremain had helped himself to a stretch of deserted pavement, and Helen had been dimly aware that people were waving, shouting, running out on to the road in their wake. But Tremain had

damaged nothing as yet, except, it might be, his own clean driving licence. . . .

Even to Helen, who had no task to give her relief from her thoughts, they seemed to be hurrying now. The tarmac road, edged rose and rose until one fought for breath.

Now the wind knew no restraint. It seemed to Helen to fight like a demon against the car, to spend its uttermost



"Her hands went up to her breast. 'Oh,' she breathed; and then, in a whisper that filled the room with articulate pain, 'Jimmy!'"

with bracken and low grey walls, was like a ribbon their wheels unwound from a spool. Faster and faster it was unrolled towards them, curving a little to one side and the other, rising and falling in half-mile ripples as though the wind had caught it. And then, where it ran for three straight miles across the moor, it was a ribbon no more, but the stream of a giant hose that the distance played in their faces, a stream whose pressure

strength in trying to hold them back. It screamed in her face, crushing the goggles against her skin, pinching her nostrils, twisting her lips awry. So real had become the thought of a tangible enemy, that when something lashed her across the neck below her shingled hair, and beat a devil's tattoo on the shaven skin, she started, and smothered a cry. Her hand went up—to clutch the flapping collar-strap of her waterproof.

Tremain had felt her move. In the last half-mile a moaning whistle that seemed to come from the bonnet had risen in pitch and power till it reached a sustained metallic scream that drowned all other sound. thought she misread it, feared a breakdown. "That noise," he yelled, with his head bent sideways towards her, but his face still looking forward, "all right. Just air. All

up to fifty and started again. . . . The car was taking Brecky Tor as the ski-er takes the rise before the jump. Helen shut her eyes, and felt the seat rise beneath her and fling her up and up. . . . There was a sickening sense of void, a rolling lurch as the wheels came back to earth. Penhallow was leaping up towards them from the other

ah, she remembered now. The thing went

side of the Tor.

They had entered the last three miles;



same wind in chimney-" She nodded,

the last moor valley-faced them, seemingly vertical, on Brecky Tor. Helen was watching his hands on the wheel. They were big, brown, capable-looking hands; hands to merit confidence. The knuckles were brown too, she noticed, not white. She had thought he must be gripping the thing like mad. . . .

Forty? She gazed in dull surprise at the hand of the speedometer. Forty? Butmoor had allowed, Helen no longer burned to tell Tremain to hurry. The car was roaring through high-banked tunnels of shade, and the scream of the wind had given place to the ceaseless blare of the horn. The hedges on either side, taller by feet than the road was wide, seemed to be guiding them as a barrel guides the bullet; only a barrel has no corners. . . .

Never a stretch of a hundred yards but led to a corner. The car would fling itself up the straight, faster and faster, nearer and nearer, till Helen shut her teeth, and thought, "This time——"; then the four brakes would grip together, and she would feel herself toppled irresistibly forward, only to be snatched back, pressed into the seat, as the unsilenced engine whooped like a syren up the scale from one gear to the next, and threw the car at the next corner ahead.

Tremain had flicked a glance at the dashboard clock; and now, whenever the road was wide enough, he skidded his turns, holding the nose of the car to the inner bank while the stern twitched round in a series of slithering bounds. It was when they had taken a corner thus, bucking round like a vicious horse intent on keeping its heels towards an enemy, that they came on another car, drawn in to the side of the road at the sound of the horn; and passed it scatheless, with two wheels up on the bank.

Five minutes after Brecky Tor—thirteen minutes after the start—Tremain was skidding the car to a standstill on the edge of

Tregissey quay.

Helen glanced once round the harbour, hoping, against conviction, to see the Kittiwake riding safe. Then she was out, and running down to the steps in pursuit of Tremain. The blankets trailed from her arms, hampering her in her haste, threatening momently to trip her.

Tremain had been leaning over the side, shouting to Willy Johns, who was cleaning brass on Major Maryatt's launch. He took the blankets from Helen and tossed them down at the boatman's feet; then caught her arm and hurried her down the

steps.

Johns had started the engine, and the launch began to move. He motioned Tremain to take the tiller, stood up, put his hands to his mouth. "Hey!" he roared to the harbour in general. "Where's Mr. Mansfield to? Onyone knaw where Kittiwake's to?" The fishermen who worked on the decks of the yawls—they never put out of Tregissey on a Friday—sent the question across from boat to boat, back to the Old

Pier, through Fish Market into the village. From two directions at once the answer came jumping back: "Whiffing for mackerel off the Bury." Johns raised a hand in acknowledgment, and turned to relieve Tremain of the tiller.

Tregissey had dropped a mile astern, and the cliffs were creeping by. The sea was smooth, moved by a faint but regular swell; but here and there dark patches showed where the off-shore wind puffed unexpectedly out of the mouths of valleys. To Helen, who sat in silence hiding an agony of impatience, it seemed that the same rock faced her across the boat each time she raised her eyes. It was impossible to believe that they had been in the Manor twenty minutes ago.

Tremain, crouching over the engine, turned to speak to Johns. "I'll see that Maryatt isn't annoyed about this. He and I are old friends. And it wasn't a case for delay."

"I've heard un tell of 'ee, sir," said Johns, "and I knaw Miss Trevithick well enough, don't I, missy? 'Tis nothing to borrow the boat." His old, tanned face, with its steady blue eyes, vouchsafed no smallest hint of the curiosity that was consuming him. Not for worlds would he have asked Tremain his reasons for his urgent desire to find the Kittiwake. He was a proud, reserved old man, respecting pride and reserve in others.

The launch swung out to round a point that had hidden a mile of coast from their view. "Happen we'll see un now," said Johns. "We'm——" He broke off short, and stared as Tremain and Helen were staring, at a curved, black, hump-backed thing in the water half a mile away.

Helen, with eyes for nothing but the two white hands, that even from there showed up against the black, was crying, "Oh, we're in time, we're in time." But Tremain, busying himself with the brandy-bottle he had taken from his pocket, was thinking, in a sudden wonder, "I didn't believe it. All the time, I didn't believe it. I only came because Helen—is Helen." And with realisation came the bitter amendment, "Mansfield's Helen."

Mansfield, before his strength gave out, had contrived to throw his tie over the shaft of the *Kittiwake's* little screw, had knotted the ends together and made a double noose. When they found him he hung by the wrists, his head above water most of the time, his face against the hull.

For a time, while Helen steered for Tregissey, and Johns and Tremain were working in anxious silence, it seemed that after all they had come too late. Then the blanketed body shuddered under their hands, and Mansfield moved his lips.

"Helen," he said, "I knew you'd come But his eyes had never opened to

tell him she had.

"He knew?" said Johns. "And you knew, sir. And Missy there, she knew. For the Dear Life, why didn't 'ee tell me, sir?" They told him, then, and he seemed to take it all as a matter of course. . . .

Half-way back to the harbour they met another boat from Tregissey, and answered its urgent hails; telling it to go on, and tow the *Kittiwake* in. It had put out on account of a message over the 'phone.

Sanders, Tregissey's doctor, paused in the doorway of his sitting-room, and smiled at Tremain and Helen.

"Well," he said, "there's nothing to look so glum about! Pretty near thing, you know, but a miss is as good as a mile. He'll be cursing me for keeping him in bed, this time to-morrow. Not that I mean to keep him there long. You do make sure of a doctor's best attention, when you plank yourself in his one spare room. But look here, Tremain"—he became more serious, and showed some faint signs of distress—"the fellow wants to see you. Eh? Yes, of course he ought to be quiet; but he's worrying, do you see? And I can't have that—""

Tremain, uncertain, looked at Helen. "Perhaps," he suggested, "Miss Trevithick—" Sanders's distress was visible now. He did not seem to have heard. "I'll show you the way," he said, "if you'll come along."

When he had taken Tremain upstairs, he returned to Helen. "Look here, young lady," he said, "I'm going to mix you a drink—no, go steady with the applause—a nasty, pharmaceutical drink. The strongest of us react to nervous strain, you know. You look too much like landing me in for another case. And Heaven knows," he added piously, "that I hate work. . . ."

Tremain was bending over the bed, listening to the thin, weak voice of the man he

had saved—for Helen.

"You see why I'm telling you, don't you? You fished me out, and I sort of owe it you. I've always been led to regard you as a kind of traditional rival. . . . I was in love with Helen, I swear. Madly in love. I was utterly sure the thing was real, permanent. There's a sort of swine who

always is sure—'this time.' My sort. And Helen—nice sort of thing to say, isn't it? Well, I'm a nice sort of chap—Helen was madly in love with me. It was once when —when things were like that—that she told me about the second-sight legend. Told me she'd always know if I called to her in extremis. Don't know that I believed her. . . .

"I told you the sort I am. It simply ended—petered out. I tried to bluff myself for a bit, and to bluff her; then I told her. It was—oh, what's the good of that? It was the only thing to do. And I'd done it all before, of course. Only until it was Helen, I'd never realised what it meant. . . .

"To-day's affair was the usual story. Tying the sheet in an off-shore wind. She went over without the slightest warning. I'd got gumboots on—tight ones I couldn't kick off. That's what prevented me from climbing out. I wasted a lot of my strength on those boots, before I gave it up.

"After a time my hands began to slip. You can grip the edge of a plank, on a clinker-built boat like that, but it isn't long before your finger-tips go numb. Just when you think that you're safe for a bit, your hands come away, and your mouth

goes under. . . .

"It was when my hands were slipping nearly all the time, and I was pretty well face to face with the end of it, that I thought of Helen's words. I'd like you to think I hesitated even then—hesitated to call for help to the girl I'd treated like that. . . . However—why should you? I didn't. It was too important to save my skin. One begins to wonder it should have seemed so

important. . .

"I tell you, I knew she'd come. How? There wasn't a how. I simply knew. That was what gave me strength to make a lashing. I always did have a weird sort of power over Helen. Perhaps it was that—the knowledge of that—well, I don't know. Anybody might fall for Helen, of course. But once or so in a life, you do meet someone like that—someone you know instinctively will dance to your tune. . . . It's nothing to do with yourself. I lack the psychological jargon to give you a pseudo-explanation. But it happens. It leads you on. And of course you both get bitten."

His voice tailed off, and he seemed to be asleep. Tremain went softly to the door, closed it behind him, and came downstairs. His breath was hissing between his teeth, and his hands were shaking. From first to

last he had not said a word.

"Helen," Tremain jerked out, as he steered a careful homeward course behind borrowed headlights, "when I went up to see him, back at Sanders's place, he—he told me. I don't know—what to say, Helen? And you can hardly strangle a man before he's recovered from having his life saved. Though the temptation can be remarkably strong—"

He stopped. After all, he thought, she cares for the swine——

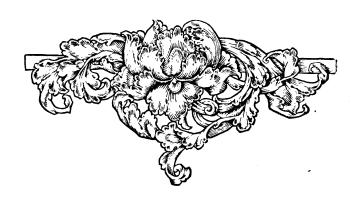
"Temptation?" Helen's voice was very tired. "Yes. I was tempted, too. It wouldn't have been very hard to have persuaded myself that the whole thing was nerves. You see, I've hated Jimmy pretty desperately. . . . Not a very noble hate, I'm afraid. Most of it came from humiliation. I thought you all knew. It never

struck me Polverris could harbour a secret. I thought that people were laughing at me; and after the real wound began to heal, the other thing hurt an astonishing lot. . . . I don't think I hate him now. I understand him better. He's—simply nothing, is he? But I did think you knew."

Tremain laughed awkwardly. "Not I," he said. "I thought—if the whole thing wasn't a trick your nerves had played on you—that I was combining the jobs of lifeboatman and—matchmaker. I—I wasn't so terribly keen on doing it, Helen."

Her voice was sleepy now, and he felt that her head was making tentative—he feared, unconscious—advances towards his shoulder.

"But you did it," said Helen, and frankly wriggled into a posture conducive to sleep, "you did it. I rather like you for that."



A SLEEP CALL.

YOU stirred with your mischievous hands the leaves at the foot of the thorn, And dragged out from under its roots some sort of a glimmering trove, And now that the breath of the mist is blown from the crescent's wee horn, You are thinking of robbing, I know, the star from the sky up above.

The mannerly hours of the dusk are willing to help you to thieve,

For they are the merchants that fare from the West to a magical mart,

And the white-headed son of a king would beg for the ranns that they weave,

And they'll sell you a dream for your heels, but they'll steal the love out of your heart.

Oh, I bid you not barter with those that come from a country afar, To traffic in delicate things with the people that dance on the rath, For it might be a treasure of love they would want for that bit of a star, So let you, O little dark head, come in to me out of their path.

C. BERNARD.

THE RISK

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK WILES

OVING about the desolate house, Perris saw the shadow of himself as a child running before him. At this sharp curve of the stairway he had played highwayman; along the corridor was a cupboard that had made an ideal lion's den. His old nursery—he came to the door, hesitated, then stepped into the room. Familiar faces looked down at him from the wallpaper: Sindbad, Aladdin, Ali Baba. It was as if they cried aloud: "Here's little Jim Perris back again."

The nursery window opened on to a long vista of remembered youth. The same smoke-blackened trees; the plaster figure of Narcissus staring into a stagnant pool. Standing there, he realised how amazingly still the house was. The silence pressed about him, hemming him in. It was as if To-day became showman, exhibiting the Perris of Yesterday—child, youth, undergraduate. He was a dreamer, a fellow who fostered ideals.

"You young fool!" Perris said aloud.
"When will you learn to act as the world

expects you to?"

Somewhere down in the basement a bell clanged, shattering the stillness. Perris heard the dragging footsteps of the old caretaker; footsteps on the stairs; presently a voice at the door of the room where Perris stood.

"May I come in? Old Darte told me

I'd find you here."

Old Darte's quavering voice came over the other's shoulder.

"Mr. Clinton Scott to see you, sir."

Scott laughed and stepped into the room.

"Your caretaker's nothing if not decorous.

"Your caretaker's nothing if not decorous."

He persists in observing the proprieties."

Perris came forward and the two men shook hands. Clinton Scott was a bluff man in his sixties. His manner put Perris's

thirty-one years at a discount.

"I want a talk with you, Perris." He listened to the caretaker's retreating footsteps. Convinced of privacy, he added, "About Cynthia."

Perris nodded. Words, sentences, were instantly clamant for utterance. He pushed them aside, waiting in silence for the other's voice.

"About Cynthia." Scott cleared his throat and fidgeted with his watch-chain. "She's—naturally she's cut up over this." Scott waved his hand towards the desolation of the room. His gesture might have comprised the rest of the house, dim rooms and echoing corridors. "You see, Perris, you've let yourself in for this break-up by—by—" He searched for a word. "Truant beggars, words—never on hand when you need them. Impractical—that's the thing in a nutshell. You can't do business to-day unless you're hard-headed, alert, practical." He beat the word out with the flat of his right hand in the palm of his left. "And you're a dreamer."

Perris nodded again. At the moment speech seemed futile. He had dreamt. Visions beckoned alluringly and he had followed.

Scott took a turn about the floor; then came back to his old place against the window. "Of course your hands are clean. A strained sense of honour—someone said that of you. I want you to understand that I respect you, Perris. You ring true. But—impractical."

Perris spoke at last.

"And I suppose as Cynthia's father you want to withdraw your consent to our engagement?"

Perris prided himself on the level note of his question. But his eyes belied him.

"I'm here to make a suggestion," Scott said. "Something that will make it easy for Cynthia to—"

"Give me my marching orders," Perris

supplied.

"Why, yes, it comes to that. Cynthia being Cynthia, you can't expect to marry on nothing a year."

"You think not?" Perris demurred. "Better a dish of herbs where love is . . ."

"Spare me quotations. You know

Cynthia. Is she the sort to marry a poor man? Can you picture her in a four-room house? Can you see her with an apron on doing kitchen chores? Cynthia? Come now, Perris, you're not entirely a fool."

Perris found himself watching Scott as he might have watched a stranger. He was some denizen of a far country talking gibberish. He was a monster of common sense. He was an impregnable rock affording Cynthia shelter from the quicksands of

Perris's dreams and fancies.

"I've an offer to make," Scott was saying. "I've a post for you, Perris, and if you're wise you'll take it. A married man might hesitate, but a bachelor, carefree—"

Perris's head lifted suddenly. Something in the gesture brought an abrupt silence into the room. But the silence was heavy with implication: sentences ran to and fro in it, weaving " You patterns. must live, Perris ... and everything has gone in this crash. But you can't Cynthia to share such a life. There are barriers; you can't scale them. . . . Cyn-

thia on one side and you on the other."

Perris spoke suddenly.

"I'm in a cleft stick. I'll have to accept your offer. But some day——"

"Some day you'll learn to be practical?" Scott doubted. "Well, that's that, Perris. I'll be off now. I've a business appointment and I've driven things fine coming to see you. Remember, I respect you—you ring true. But you're too dreamy, too much in the clouds."

The resonant notes of Scott's voice silenced, the stillness of the house seemed

emphasised. Old Darte's mumbling tones awoke echoes. His drooping shoulders seemed to epitomise the fallen estate of the house. Perris had an abrupt desire to say, "For Heaven's sake, Darte, don't croak," when the old man came presently to his side.

"It will be all right for me to go out for an hour or two, sir? I want to see about moving my things to my daughter's."

"Certainly. I shall be in all evening." The caretaker was moving haltingly



"Old Darte's quavering voice came over the other's shoulder. 'Mr. Clinton Scott to see you, sir.' Scott laughed and stepped into the room."

towards the doorway. Perris's voice recalled him

"Darte—I want you to understand how sorry I am to unsettle you. If things had gone well there would have been a place for you as long as you cared to stay."

Darte fumbled with his sleeve buttons, his eyes on the ground. Then abruptly sentences came to his aid. In his eagerness he almost stuttered.

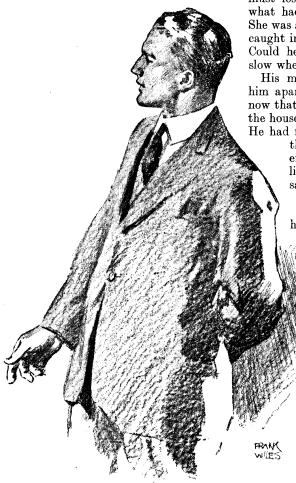
"Mr. Perris . . . folks may blame you, but I say, 'Mr. Perris, he's all right. His hands are clean. If it's a smash it's a

straight smash.' Things are going to be pretty tight for you, sir? I'm an old servant, so you'll let me ask?"

"Tight?" Perris's mouth twisted.
"Rather—for the present. But Madame
To-morrow? She's a friendly soul sometimes, Darte."

"I hope so. I hope so." The reiteration of the phrase lasted till the sound of the old man's retreating footsteps had grown still.

Perris crossed the floor to the window.



" Perris came forward."

There was a presage of storm in the air. A wrack of clouds hid the sun. Trees and shrubs showed unfamiliar outlines, half draped in shadow. The plaster figure of Narcissus became grotesque. . . He was faced with his own visions, gazing at the heights towards which he had aspired. Dreams of a new heaven and a new earth

... a hundred plans for the betterment of working conditions... The fruit of his dreams had been failure. He faced life as it lay before him now. It would probably be still dream haunted and impractical. He jerked at the repetition of the last word. He had so often heard it on Cynthia's lips.

Cynthia.

The thought of her was like the throbbing of a wound. It seemed inevitable that he must lose her. A poor man; a failure—what had he to do with Cynthia Scott? She was afire with the zest of life. She was caught into the rhythm of prosperous days. Could he bind so vivid a creature to the slow wheels of his progress?

His musings had deafened him, setting him apart in a sealed chamber. Realising now that a bell clanged in the lower part of the house, Perris went out on to the landing. He had forgotten old Darte's absence. On

> the ground floor he opened the entrance door with apologies on his lips. They fell to silence when he saw who stood on the threshold.

"Cynthia!"

"I must speak to you, Jim. In here." She turned into the dining-room on the left of the hall.

"There are things I must say."

Against the dark panelling of the dining-room she looked like a rare flower, transplanted. She had exquisite colouring of hair and skin. Something in her bearing suggested a winged creature poised for flight.

"Can I cage her?" Perris thought. He looked at her as a man in shadow would watch a shaft of sunlight.

"Your father was here this afternoon," Perris said.

"Yes, I know." She was twisting and untwisting her muff chain as she spoke. "I know. That's why I came. I—what aid he say?"

Perris had taken up his position against the empty firegrate. The space of floor that lay between them was eloquent of his fallen fortune. He forced his voice to a dull level of response.

"He implied what any sensible man would have implied—that we must wait. But Cynthia, someday——"

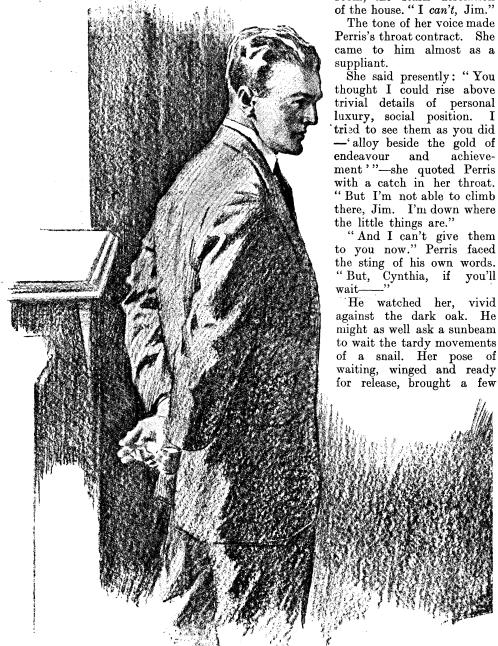
She came towards him quickly, her

hands lifted in an impulsive gesture of entreaty.

"Jim, I—I can't go on. These dreams

But we have to live in the world. And when we followed the light of the lamp it led to this." She indicated the empty

room, the stark desolation



"Perris watched her in silence. Perris's came now, hurried

silences always brought Cynthia to explanations. They and impetuous." $\,$

of yours, these ideals—at first they had a glamour. They drew me towards you. As if I found a lighted lamp in a drab world!

staccato sentences to his lips. "You're free, Cynthia. I understand.

Forgive me."

"You don't understand entirely." She came near to him. He winced at the sight of tears in her eyes. "Conscience pricks me, gives me no rest. Sunshine, summer—and I'm yours. Grey sky, winter—and I escape." She put one hand on Perris's arm. "It's contemptible. I hate myself."

"It's contemptible. I hate myself."
"Don't do that." He laid a hand on hers as it rested on his arm. "It was my fault. I tried to push you towards my point of view. But you can't see things through another person's eyes. Don't let it hurt you, Cynthia—Cynthia."

"You're trying to put me right in my own eyes. You were always the true knight. But I'm not born for love—or weariness—in a cottage. Wash-days—

and even a charwoman luxury." She smiled wryly. "It's no use, Jim. I

can't face it."
"I understand.
You're free,
Cynthia. I
can't hold

"'Jim, I said this afternoon I couldn't

and still in silence, she was at the door, feeling the mute touch of Perris's fingers on hers in parting.

She had worn violets in her belt. The fragrance lingered, ghost-like, in dim corners of the room. Perris was pursued by it.



you captive. Nothing shall bind you."

She was hunting diligently for phrases—but with no success. Silence was a cloak thrown suddenly around her. Presently,

The dining-room was stripped of everything save a chair and a small table. Perris drew a chair to the empty firegrate, leant his head in his hands, and let thought have

its way with him. He had lost Cynthia. She could not brook a life depleted of luxury. The wheels of life must always be well oiled for Cynthia's chariot. He recalled her voice: "I'm not born for love-or weariness—in a cottage. Wash-days . . . even a charwoman a luxury . . . I can't face it." Perris the dreamer was immersed now in picture-making. He saw first vivid pictures of the past. His father and mother had married on a pittance. Perris's mother had grown shrewish under the strain. tion, curbed, set her chafing. Like Cynthia, she had held in youth a suggestion of a winged personality; but the wings clipped, she dropped heavily to earth. Perris's father had grown morose under the whip of her tongue. Even when success came the rift was not healed. She had failed in the dark days and Perris's father had a trick of memorising the past to the exclusion of the present. But—Cynthia? Perris the dreamer built fantastic cottages of imagination—and discarded them with a sick sense of failure. Even fancy could not show him Cynthia aproned and standing at the washtub. Risk? Perris quailed at the thought of it.

Heralds of evening crept into the room. The shadows intensified, hanging heavily about the empty walls. They took pity on the room, shrouding its nakedness. The wind in a flurried passing shook the window curtains and held mimicry of stealthy footfalls. The sound ceasing was like the sudden pause of some approaching figure. Another fluttering of the curtains and the steps came on again, halted presently at Perris's side. Perris, eyes closed, head bent, was visualising his father, holding dream converse with him. Almost he could have fancied a sharply uttered sentence:

"No, Jim, no—not you. Be glad you're not to take the risk I took. Be thankful Cynthia turned you down. Keep your dreams of her. You might lose them if you

risk what I risked."

Perris could have laughed for very bitterness. His fancies were leading him into strange paths. He was realising that perhaps he could keep Cynthia only by losing her. Apart they would at least have fragrant memories. Together—under these new conditions? Together—in a cottage? He got to his feet, tingling. A risk—and a greater one than he dare face. He found himself apostrophising the shadows.

"Cynthia, you're right. We can't face it. The risk is too heavy. I can't lose my

dreams of you. I can't pull you down from your pedestal. A shrewish and discontented slave . . . no, no, a thousand times. I'm glad we're not to risk it."

Somebody was ringing the front-door bell. For the second time he remembered old Darte's absence and went quickly to the door. Opening it, he saw Cynthia on the threshold.

"Jim—can I come in for a moment? I must see you again."

He followed her into the dining-room and switched the light on. Illumined, the room showed the epitome of desolation. He saw her glance about her quickly before she spoke.

"It's horribly desolate, Jim. It—it makes one think almost lovingly of a cottage. At least it would be snug. It wouldn't echo."

Perris watched her in silence. Perris's silences always brought Cynthia to explanations. They came now, hurried and impetuous.

"Jim, I said this afternoon I couldn't face love in a cottage. But—but—I can't give you up when you're in trouble. Summer, sunshine—and Cynthia's yours. Grey skies, winter—and she's not there. No, no, it's hateful. I can't face it. It would be better to face wash-days. I'll take the risk of the cottage. Risk? I tell you I'll take it, Jim."

Perris fought a strangling sense of dismay. He detested himself as a dreamer, a man of imagery. He fought for forgetfulness of his mental picture of Cynthia grown sharp and shrewish, and with clipped wings. Risk? He saw Cynthia now pushing them both towards some great game of hazard.

She came close to him. "I'll risk it, Jim. After all, the risk's mine only. You get what you want since love in a cottage hasn't any fears for you. A risk—but I'll face it."

Perris's hands closed over hers. "That's dear of you. My winged Cynthia!"

She looked up quickly. "Almost you sound as if you were saying good-bye."

"Did I? I'm a fanciful fellow. I've often pictured you with wings."

"They'll not help me cook your dinner," she jested.

Perris, in a moment's silence, saw them both as gamblers risking rich argosies of dreams.

"Life's made up of ventures," he said aloud. "It's plucky of you to take this one."

He was wondering if somewhere and somehow his father knew. And if so, if he would hear Perris's unspoken whisper that now and then even a cargo of ideals might weather the storms and come safely to port.



OVERHEARD AT LORD'S.

HE: I wonder what's up, they're very late starting.

SHE: Oh well, for such an important match I suppose it takes them a long while to pick up sides!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

MY ONLY DERBY.

By R. T. Lee.

It is some years ago now since my wife decided that we would go to the Derby. Cynthia's real hobby is Art, but on this occasion she wanted to adopt the rôle of a sportswoman; I don't know why, but I suppose for the same that Cicero liked to be thought a poet, and Thackeray an artist. Of course no male can admit that he knows nothing about racing, so I had to pretend to at least a knowledge of certain sporting phrases. For a woman, in these days, it was different, and Cynthia confessed to total ignorance of all racing matters, except what she had read up in the papers the day before.

We decided to go in our own car to save expense. We achieved that object, since it was the insurance company who paid for my radiator and the other fellow's rear-lamp.

Clothes were the first consideration to engage Cynthia's attention.

"You must wear a top-hat at the Derby," she said authoritatively.

Here I was on firm ground.

"Nonsense," I said. "That's only at Ascot—er—or Goodwood. I shall wear a tweed suit and a bowler hat."

"Oh," said Cynthia, "it's that sort of show, is it? Then I shall wear spats and a stock and a soft felt hat. Yes, and hang field-glasses round me."

The difficulty was that I only had one pair of glasses, and I was looking forward to wearing those myself.

"But I saw two pairs hanging up in your room," said Cynthia.

"One is only an empty case."

"Never mind that," said Cynthia, "I don't want to use them. I only want to hang them round me."

We had arranged to join up with the Garnetts on the course, real racegoers, who followed form and knew about odds and weights and measures, and even understood what the bookies were saying.

Joe Garnett greeted me with:

"Hullo, old man, what have you got on to-day?"

"There, Jim," said Cynthia aside to me, "I knew you ought to have worn a top-hat!"

- "I've not quite made up my mind what to back yet," I replied. As a matter of fact I didn't know the names of most of the horses, and those I did know, I couldn't pronounce. I opened my race-card with a nonchalant air and began to make futile little pencil-marks against two or three horses (probably nonstarters) in each race. I hardly think Joe Garnett was deceived. He turned to Cynthia and said:
 - "Now, Mrs. Jim, what are you going to do?"
 - "I should like to bet some money on a horse

in the first race," said Cynthia, after only momentary hesitation.

I felt sure there was something wrong about the expression. I nudged her elbow.

"You ought to say Back something for the 1.30," I said.

Then Cynthia surprised me. She said:

"I think we can ignore the top weights. What about Cascavarna? It was moving very well in a mile spin at half-speed a few days ago."

Of course the "it" rather spoilt it, but otherwise it was a praiseworthy reproduction of her morning paper's sporting correspondent.

"I think I shall bet on—I mean back 'Monna Lisa,'" she said. "I do so adore the picture." She seized my wife's field-glass case, and drew therefrom a handkerchief and a powder-puff.

Our visit to the paddock was trying work for novices. Personally, I did not venture on any remark, except when I was able to repeat to Mrs. Garnett some criticism which I had overheard from the man on the other side of me. But I was nervous about Cynthia; she seemed so full of chat. I caught one bit of it.

"Powerful quarters," said Joe Garnett as a

horse was led past.

"Yes," said Cynthia, "and such a sweet, gentle face."

I dare say there were other sporting gems of



THE HEAT WAVE,

VISITOR (at seaside restaurant): Waiter, this bread's got sand on it, WAITER: Yessir—but it helps to keep the butter from slipping off!

"Where shall we see the first race from?" asked Mrs. Garnett.

Cynthia's reply gave me another surprise.

"I should like to go to Tattersall's Corner," she said, "and see the horses come round with one leg over the rails; it must be so clever, I can't think how they do it."

I thought it best to treat this lapse openly. "Cynthia is a little mixed," I said. "She means Tottenham Corner." My own slip was taken for an intentional witticism (at least, I

hope it was), for they laughed, and Joe Garnett said:

"Yes, or Tattenham Court Road."

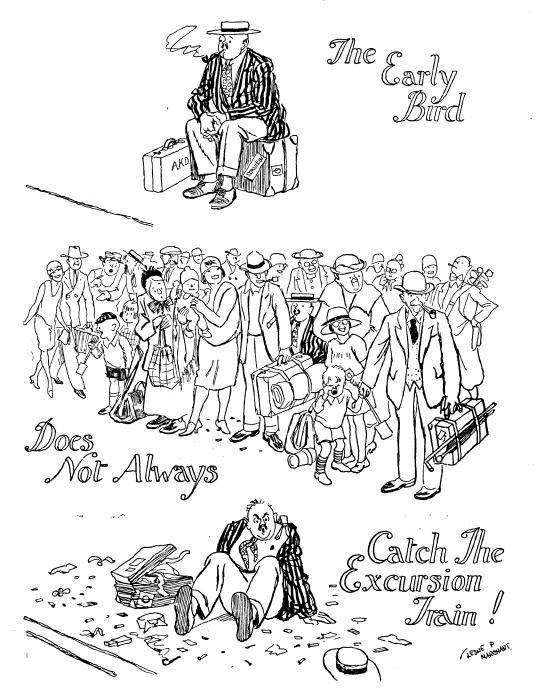
"The numbers are up!" exclaimed Mrs. Garnett suddenly. "I've left my glasses in the car. Cynthia, do you mind, I must see."

this kind, but I am afraid I was a coward and moved out of earshot.

At lunch I think we both felt more natural, and Cynthia talked about Keats and Michael Angelo. After lunch I lit a cigar, which I believe is expected of one at a race-meeting. Also I put my hat a little on one side and crushed it well down over one ear, making me look the part much better. I felt it was incumbent on me to make the plunge and face those bawling, terrifying men.

"I think I shall go and get a bit on Wyvenhoe for the Derby," I said, remembering to have seen the name on the poster of a Racing

Special.
"Scratched three days ago," said Joe Garnett contemptuously.



"Poor thing," said Cynthia; "he sprained his spavin."

"Not his spavin," I said with some heat.

"Well, his forelock, or whatever you call it," said Cynthia. Having some time to wait before the race, Cynthia suggested that she and I should stroll up on to a hill and get a bird's-eye view of the crowd. We had to go some way, and when we reached the hill, she saw some cowslips and orchids down the further slope, so we wandered on. I was glad to stretch myself

on the grass, throw away my cigar, and light a pipe. When I woke up Cynthia was still picking flowers. Then suddenly a subdued roar, growing louder and louder, reached my ears. I got up and looked at my watch.

"Good heavens! Cynthia!" I shouted. "It's over. We've missed it."

"Oh, I say; what shall we do?" she said. "I wonder who won. Look, aren't these orchids exquisite?"

We sneaked back shamefacedly, and found the

numbers for the next race already up. We had not the face to ask what had won, but it was obviously not the horse backed by either of the Garnetts, who had apparently forgotten our existence.

When we got home, I bought an evening paper and scanned the stop-press news.

Billerice won," I said casually.

Cynthia gave a little cry.

"Then I've won sixty-six pounds," she said.
"What do you mean?" I asked.

"What I say," she answered. "Cook told me the milkman said it was 'a good spec.' I just had a pound of the housekeeping money left, so

UNCLE THOMAS FISHES.

To Uncle Thomas on his holidays a pier is an absolute necessity, not for promenading, but for piscatorial purposes. So far as he is concerned, a marine resort minus a pier might just as well not exist.

Fishing from the pier is his favourite form of dissipation, though why it should be is a mystery, as he never catches anything—at least, nothing of an edible nature.

His lines and all the doings relating thereto are so alarmingly massive that at the mere sight of them all the fish in the immediate neighbourhood retire to a safe distance.



"Mother, will you speak to Willie? He keeps on wasting the water."

I sent it off to that man who has a full-page advertisement in the paper; 66 to 1 cook said the odds were. I didn't mean to tell you, but as it's won, I don't mind."

As we sipped our coffee after dinner peacefully in the garden, I said:

"This is better than that seething race-course,

isn't it?"

"But one must put up with something if one wants to earn one's livelihood," said Cynthia. "Sixty-six pounds! It's so easy, isn't it? I can't think why the Garnetts don't make it pay."



An insect has been discovered that eats tin. There is some talk of training it to open sardines.

This season, so far, he has caught one lady bather, two jellyfish, an old boot and a nasty cold.

When we ask him if he has had any sport, he says, "Sport? Yes, all the time. You young fellows who play tennis every day and dance half the night don't know what sport is!"



YOUNG AMBITIONS.

Dad says he said, when he was small, He'd be an engine-driver tall, And proudly stop at stations. I see we're far too proud when small: Dad's but a bishop after all, And drives to Confirmations.

Diantha Raeburn.

GETTING READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS. By John Leith.

Unless and until somebody gives this Slave a job, this Slave—and Encumbrances—must continue to inhabit this hut on the shore by the sea which the speculative owner of many such hired to us, at five shillings per week more

and owners of huts hereabouts can do pretty well with same then.

On Wednesdays the railway company—hats off to the good old Southern Railway—grants cheap tickets to persons who have the urge to escape this bush for a day in London. Last

Wednesday therefore I bought a cheap ticket and proceeded to the Metropolis to do a day's job-hunting. I went in the good suit, travelled in first class: \mathbf{the} these things give one a good confident start in the hunting. Half-way to town the carriage filled up with comfortable - look ing citizens who don't have to get to their daily toil places till 10.30, and can always catch the 5 p.m. home-if they want to.

For eleven months in the year these gentlemen live sedately in such outer suburbs Chiselswizz desirable modernresidences, mostly red, mostly with gables, electric light and all conveniences, carriage drive up to the front doorand tradesmen's entrance elsewhere. all included. Also the little tin notice plate about Hawkers and Dogs and Troubadours. The odd month they devote to the simple country places like

simple country life, roughing-it in places like Folworth Parva where our hut is—sand, sea, golfcourse, and three miles to the station.

This annual month of back to Nature, though expensive and uncomfortable, probably does them little lasting harm. They have always the eleven months of hard-headed-businessman-ing it in the City to recover and restore them from its effects.



THE CONSOLATION PRIZE.

Wife: Any luck, dear?
UNSUCCESSFUL ANGLER (disgustedly): No, none at all!
Wife: Then—er—would you mind coming and opening the tinned salmon?

than we can afford, in the middle of the winter. At that time of the year anybody can approach a hut-owner. Rather to our landlord's surprise, and not at all I suspect to his liking (he being insured), neither the hut nor ourselves were blown into the sea by the January gales: now that the sun has begun to shine again and the gales are less forceful he would be well pleased to see the backs of us. Summer is coming on,

When the carriage filled the other morning the gentlemen, conscious first-class season ticketers to a man, surveyed me and sniffed at me in the way of their kind towards persons like me who for wantonness travel on a cheap day ticket. It never fails to disturb and distress me, gives me that guilty feeling. However, one of the gentlemen bestowed himself with some vehemence into a little puddle which had collected in a corner seat—heavy rain the night before. That happening cheered me, restored my confidence, made me feel good. Courtesy no less than prudence determined me to dissemble my satisfaction: I rejoiced therefore in the seasonable and entirely charming view of primroses profusely spangling the sides of the cutting through which we were speeding.

Their study of the paper completed, say fifteen minutes given up to the doings of Mussolini and other world happenings and literature, the gentlemen talked together: the not-quite-so-welloff ones civilly addressing the others as Mister -whatever it was. The conversation was mainly about plans for the annual month's simple-life-ing. The gentleman who plumped into the puddle was, I thought, a little taciturn, but even he announced projected hutting-it, here in Folworth Parva. I shall look for him in August-unless of course I have landed a job by then. All the gentlemen seemed to know the place: they agreed that it was remote, primitive, old-world, restfulwhat a debt the present-day cultured speaker owes to the house agent!

My natural diffidence apart, it seemed to be no business of mine to tell them that since Easter we have lived in an atmosphere of growing bustle. Folworth Parva's hut-let-ers, awakened from their winter sleep, are, like the gorse and other flowering herbs, burgeoning forth: like the birds, busy. They are getting taking up grass and putting down stone. When ready for the annual orgy of skinning the visitors, whereby they live: going about whistling, they are. The butcher and the baker and the milk-monger and the carrier and the brigand who sells fish and the rest of them are already openly licking their unsanctified chops in anticipation. 'Tis a mighty killing they intend this summer.

True it is that though we live here we are not admitted to full fellowship with the natives. Still, they are not for ever on their guard, and a word here, a word there—the nod, the beck, the wreathed smile-we are getting wise to their wicked intents.

It may seem a little tough for the hard-headed men of business, meaning to come here weary, jaded, for a month with Nature. And yet-I am not sure. I confess there are men that I like better as travel companions than those hard-headed back-and-forth-ers 'twixt the City and Chiselswizz. The local primitive—he also does not always nor altogether delight us, with his hibernating like a bear in the winter and

his wolf-like ravenings throughout the summer. It may be that Folworth Parva-ite and Chiselswizzer discipline each other, which must surely be good for both of them, and is exceedingly pleasant to watch.



THE REAL GOOD TIME.

A daily paper suggests that one of the happiest parts of a holiday is the packing.

The charms of the pier and the jetty Are all very well in their way, The pierrette (admittedly pretty), The dip in the brine every day, The rapture of thoroughly slacking When the boss cannot take it amiss, But to me the excitement of packing Is the acme of holiday bliss.

I am e'en as a prizewinning photo Of joy that will wane not nor flag, As I turn out my wardrobe in toto And bundle it into a bag; There's naught can so surely delight me, No sight can so truly divert As a boot not as clean as it might be Wrapped up in an evening shirt.

With rapture full often I tingle, Enjoying completely the fun When a sock and the dentifrice mingle, The soap and a tie become one; And this sense of enjoyment ne'er ceases, No worry this rapture can quell, But rather my pleasure increases When my garments are with them as well. T. Hodgkinson.



PAVEMENT MADNESS.

In our suburb just now the craze for crazy pavement borders on insanity, and I have myself taken the complaint in a mild form.

The great thing about crazy pavement is that you don't have to mow it, and I had an idea of I approached the local pavement-purveyor with the details of my scheme he said, "Yes, you'll want a ton." I suggested that a couple of hundredweights would meet my requirements, but he remained firm and insisted that it was quite impossible to do anything at all in the crazy line with less than a ton of stone.

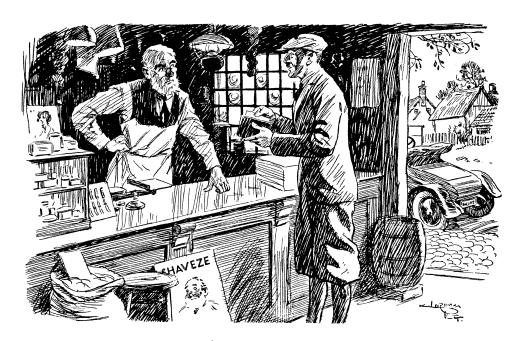
I departed sorrowing and proceeded to make drastic alterations in my original plans. When the pavement merchant saw me coming next time, he reached for his order book and inquired, "How many tons?"

"Listen," I said. "What I want is a nice little slab weighing about four ounces to mark the last resting-place of a favourite deceased canary.

The piece he threw at me as I retreated hurriedly did nicely for the purpose.



"Stiff collars lead to baldness," says a doctor. Judging from some of our young artists, soft collars lead to whiskers.



TO UBLIGE.

Customer: Can you change a pound note? VILLAGE DRUGGIST (cautiously): Certainly. How'll you have it? In pills or cough-drops?



NO LACK OF ATTENTION.

Shop-walker: Is anyone attending to you, miss? Rustic: Well, yes, thank 'ee, sir—George is outside. I asked un in, but 'e wouldn't.

THE PUKKA CRICKETER. By W. E. Richards.

"Simmons is coming down to-morrow," remarked my host.

"Do I know him?" I asked.

"C. L. A. Simmons. The Simmons. The old Blue. Plays for Loamshire, when he is not enjoying a difference with his committee."

"I remember," I replied. "I met him once, in pre-war days. I asked him for his autograph. Do you really mean he's going to bat against us on a plumb wicket?"

"That's the idea. I thought it would do us good to persuade a pukka cricketer to come down."

"When does he get in?" I asked.

"Farnworth station at 3.30."

"I'll run my two-seater out and meet him."

"It's very good of you," asserted my host.
"I'm frightfully busy, and, of course, as you've met him before——"

"Simmons?" I asked, grasping the hand of the tall, athletic figure. "This is my bus, jump in." I understood him to mutter something about "traps." I flung his suit-case into the dickey, and grasped the wheel.

"Cricket bag," he gasped.

"Oh, is that yours?" Î said. "What a nice bag! I always wanted a leather one. Of course



A DANGEROUS OUTLOOK.

POLITICIAN: An' if we ain't precious eareful 'ow we vote the masters'll be the bosses!

"But did you know Simmons was coming when I bet a fiver we'd win?"

"I've only just got his wire," replied my host evasively.

"I shall bribe the umpires," I declared.

"It won't do. They've been on the estate for years. Besides, they like to see a bit of good batting."

"I shall forge a telegram saying his favourite

aunt is ill."

"No good. I never knew a cricketer with so few aunts."

"I hope he smashes the conservatory."

"He'll smash your bowling average. Those nice little long hops——"

we have green baize down here. So you're playing cricket? How lovely. Do you play much?"

"A little," he agreed. "There's a match tomorrow, isn't there?"

"Well, we did talk of a match."

"But I understood this was arranged. In fact, I came down here with the idea of playing."

"In that case," I said, "we must fix one up. We can always rake a team up from the village."

"Any good?" he demanded, trying to be cheerful.

"Not so bad," I said airily. "I'm afraid something's gone wrong with the starter. Shan't be a minute."

"There's no hurry," he said. "What's the ground like?"

"I don't know whether we're playing on the Home Field or the Rectory Close. The Home Field, if they've finished mowing. I beg your pardon."

"Not at all," said Simmons hastily.

"I insisted on the whole field being mown," I went on. "It's so annoying to lose the ball in the long grass. Of course a lost ball counts six, and six runs are worth having."

"Who's playing besides ourselves?" he asked.

"Our host captains your side. The umpires will be on your side The other too. contains the cream of the local talent. The squire and the rector open the innings. We send the squire in first because it comes natural to put his name at the head of the list. You see he heads all our subscriptions. And the Rector likes to get his knock over early on Saturdays to have the evening free for polishing his sermon. Then there's the postman, who has to start his last delivery at 5.30, and the doctor, whose surgery hour is at six, so they never stay

long. The rest are nondescripts, but we've a gardener who bowls excellent underhand lobs."

I thought I detected a groan from Simmons.

"Hope you've brought a bat in that jolly bag of yours," I continued. "We're short of bats, and I'll swear one will go to pieces when the blacksmith swings it. The ball, I should think, will just last out the match. No, don't

get out. I'll get the old bus to start this time."

"If you don't mind," said Simmons, quite firmly, "just to stretch my legs a little."

"Keep away from the tyres," I warned him. "I picked up some tar on the road. You



THE LOGIC OF FATE.

Mrs. Hope: It's Fate that decides for us, Mrs. 'Iggs. My first 'usband was a fish 'awker an' my second a carpenter. Now what else could you expect, with me always so partial to fish and chips?

mustn't mess your clothes before to-morrow's match."

"You don't suggest that I'm going to play in these?" he demanded.

"You must. The village has never seen Oxford bags before, and we mustn't disappoint the public. But I must warn you there's at least one wasp's nest in the Home Field, and

those bags might be a temptation to the little beggars. We don't trouble to change," I went "Just a sporting knock to amuse on cheerfully. the village lads. It looks so ridiculous to turn out in flannels and then get bowled by a shooter. The boys barrack that sort of thing."

Simmons became more agitated.

"You're sure you're playing cricket tomorrow," he asked, "not rounders, or hunt the slipper, or hop-scotch or any of those games?"

"Quite sure, because we've got all the tools. Nice little wickets—we borrowed those from the

tion on his face.

LOOKING AHEAD. YOUTH OF SEVENTY (who has been offered a job): "Oi, but th' wages ve offer me ain't enough—it wouldn't gimme a chance o' puttin' a bit by fer owld age!

Lads' Brigade. And we've got two pads, two full-size brown pads. We shall have to toss up whether the wicket-keeper or the batsmen are to use them. Personally I think the batsmen should have one apiece. The wicketkeeper can always use a coat."

But Simmons had fled. I heard him ask the booking clerk for the next train back to Town.

My host received a wire later in the day saying that Simmons had been unavoidably detained by the serious illness of his aunt.

"Pity," said my host, handing me the tele-

"You're in luck. You wouldn't have gram. got rid of him easily."

"I don't know," I murmured. "A little head work sends the best of batsmen back." I won my fiver by three wickets.

융용융

The curtain came down and the rehearsal was over.

Walking round behind the wings, the producer, who had been watching the performance, called to an actor.

He led the way to his private office. The actor followed closely behind, a smile of satisfac-

Once inside the office, however, the smile quickly disappeared, for with an angry frown

on his face the producer began:

"Look here, Melville, I've been sitting in the third row and I haven't heard a single word you've said. Your elocution is as monotonous as the song of the bumblebee. You can't walk across stage—you waddle across it like a duck. Your wig looks like a secondhand hearth-rug. Your clothes hang on you as they would on a clotheshorse. You've so many pairs of hands you don't know what to do with them, and if you take my advice you'll go and stuff your feet in your pockets."

"Otherwise — I suppose I am quite good?" queried the actor.



With a fearful jerk the bus drew up against the curb. One or two people on top craned their necks over the side, endeavouring to see what was happening.

At last an old woman, carrying a heavy box, clambered wearily aboard. She deposited the box on the seat beside her.

A nervous gentleman sitting opposite, with his foot swathed in bandages, eyed the huge package with evident distrust.

"Do you think that box is quite safe there?"

he inquired.

"Oh yes," she replied blithely. "It's locked!"

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THE PERMANENT WAVER.

A MAN who used to travel up to town in our railway carriage daily succeeded in making himself extremely unpopular with his fellow passengers. He was known as the "permanent waver."

His garden ran down to the railway bank, and every morning as the train approached the spot he rose from his seat in the far corner, walked

over all our feet and then leant from the window and solemnly waved six times with a folded, newspaper towards his wife, who, regardless of the weather, was always stationed at the garden fence to take the salute.

This ritual duly accomplished, he would crash his way back to the corner again, accompanied by fervent benedictions from the owners of the trampled boots. At length we decided that this thing had gone far enough.

One fatal day as he essayed to rise strong hands held him down to his seat, and a fat and jovial-looking personage who occupied the post of vantage very kindly, "Don't trouble to get up, old man; I'll do the waving for you this morning." He then opened the window, grasped his newspaper and gave a splendid imitation of the permanent waver, and as a happy afterthought finished up by blowing a succession of rapturous kisses.

The expression on the face of the watching wife would have made a fortune as a film "close-up."

The waver, if he still waves, does it from another carriage now.

R. H. Roberts.



SNAKY EYEBROWS.

HAVE you heard about the new style in eyebrows? An alarming fashion note says: "Instead of the usual curve, the eyebrows are cut to form a waved line until each has the

sinuous curve of a snake." The already overworked shingle wavers will now have to put in lots of overtime waving eyebrows.

Is this fad only a foretaste of the all-waved face? Shall we in due course see curly noses, corrugated chins, undulating lips and serrated ears?

This, of course, will call for more skill than a mere barber could possibly bestow. So when



A COMFORTING DIAGNOSIS.

"I thought Algy was ill, but he seems awfully bucked."

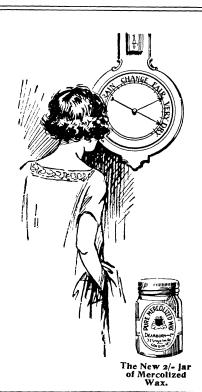
"Yes, there's no holding him since the doctor told him he was suffering from brain-fag!"

you call upon a lady and are told that she has gone to the doctor's to have her face waved, you will know that she won't be back for hours.



PATRIOTIC LADY (at the grocer's): I trust that all the goods you sell are produced in the British Empire.

GROCER: Yes, madam; even the Spanish onions and the Turkish delight.



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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

GEORGE'S TENNIS COURT. By Lambert Jeffries.

A MONOLOGUE IN ONE ACT.

Scene.—A tennis lawn (reputed) in a private garden. Enter Myself, clad in immaculate flannels, and George, bearing signs of having resurrected a net stored a long age in the deep-delved cellar. He carries a pail and a marker, and is speaking as he enters.

George. Not at all, old boy, not at all. Only too delighted to have you. (Cheerfully.) It's lucky you came early. You can help us mark out the court. That's always a bit of a bore. . . . Oh, never mind that, old boy. White splashes don't show. . . . Yes, it is a

bit messy. Can't be the right consistency — ought not to dribble like that.

(Trundles marker furiously over grass.) Well, nop'r'aps it's not very straight. The base-line's always a bit tricky.... M'yes-the service line looks as though it's been hunting everywhere for something. Ground's a bit rough just there. (E y e i n g)completed product.) Well, it's supposed to be the right size. But you may be right. Yes, it does look a bit on the small side. Rather a job to fit a court in, old boy -that border

rather spoils it, but it's so good for the roses. Yes, p'r'aps it would have been better if we could have left some space for the run-back. Still... only be careful not to tread on the violas, rather special... Oh, deuce take that net! It's always doing that. Something wrong with the ratchet, I think.... No, it's not really the proper height. The rope snaps if you wind it too tight. It's only a game, after all. (Producing a bag containing five spheroids that bounce a little and one that doesn't bounce at all.) Well... no, old boy, they're not new. But we only used them once or twice last season. M'm—p'r'aps they are a bit soft. But they bounce all right if you hit them hard enough.

(We start.) So sorry, old boy! Meant to have warned you about that lump there. Makes the service rather rotten to take, doesn't it?

Oh yes, there are one or two others about. It takes an army of groundsmen to get a lawn really flat. You have to watch the ball a bit more closely, that's all.

(A few minutes elapse.) Well I'm blessed—I believe it is . . . yes, I felt a spot myself. If that isn't annoying! We must wait till it stops, that's all. Let's hope it won't wash the line-marks out.



(An hour elapses.)

A QUESTION OF COLOUR.

FATHER: By Jove, that chap could do with a shave! SMALL GIRL: P'r'aps he can't get any black soap, daddy.

court would be simply soaked. That's the worst of grass courts. Never mind—you must come again another Saturday . . . only come early, old boy, so that we can get the court marked again in good time. . . .

(Surprised.) Oh, can't you really?

(CURTAIN.)



"Madam," shouted the angry neighbour, "that mischievous boy of yours has thrown a brick through our window."

"Really, how interesting!" exclaimed Tommy's fond mother. "I wonder if you would let me have the brick? We're keeping all the little mementos of his youthful pranks—they'll be so interesting when he grows up!"



Contributors: SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

F. BENSON - BARRY PAIN - G. B. STERN

AWN TENNIS by SUZANNE LENGLEN



TOILET SOAP

The poet Gray, writing to a friend in 1756, asked for "a friend in 1756, asked for "a freeld for mine is not so good here." Vide "Dent's Every man Series." This was Frield's Brown Windsor afterwards registered under the name of "United Service So up."

In the "Life of Ewinburne" (Clara Watts-Dunton) it is recorded that he too had a particular liking for another of rield's famous Toilet Soaps and in his house "they never permitted themselves to run short." The Soap referred to was Field's "Samphire."

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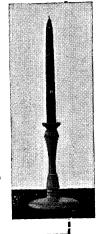
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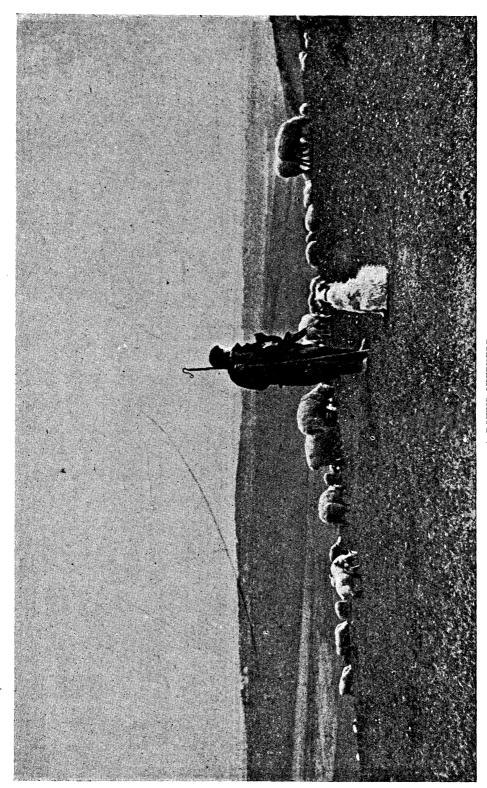


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London, S.E. 1.



A DOWNS SHEPHERD.
A photographic study by Judges', Limited, Hastings.



"A tall stout woman, followed by another who was evidently her maid. . . . Somehow Jessica distrusted the arrival."

THE QUEEN OF THE SPA

By E. F. BENSON

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

ISS JESSICA WINTHROP was taking her tea, on this warm afternoon, at one of the little iron tables which fringed the lawn in front of the hotel. This was a post with strategic advantages: she could drop bright little words of encouragement to anyone who was playing on the putting-course which zigzagged over the lawn, and she could also make an early inspection of any arrivals by the train from London which was due about this time. If the weather was inclement she took

her tea in the hall and observed them from there as they passed through to see their rooms. As soon as they had gone she looked at the names they had signed in the visitors' book.

Miss Winthrop was a very regular visitor to this Crown Hotel at Newton Spa; she much preferred it to the larger establishment, the Royal, and the Howard Arms which seemed to her garish and noisy and expensive. The Crown was a more friendly and home-like place; they were, as she

said, quite a happy family at the Crown, and she was undoubtedly the head of the family. She made friends at once with new-comers (or, if they did not appreciate her attentions, enemies); she had little conversations with the head-waiter, so that she was never given the leg of a chicken, but always the wing; she got up bridgetournaments and putting tournaments and games in the evening. They were not romping-games (because most of the visitors suffered from rheumatic troubles, which they came to Newton Spa to get rid of, and hobbled or limped or had stiff backs or shoulders) but sedentary, amusing games like Consequences and thinking of a word while somebody limped away out of earshot from the lounge, and then was recalled and made to guess it. If she decreed an evening of bridge, she tripped round to the other tables when she was dummy to see how other people were getting on, and she had her particular arm-chair in the cosiest corner of the lounge when the weather was cold, and by the window when the weather was sultry, which was recognized as peculiarly hers. Occasionally a new-comer, ignorant of its sacred character, ventured to occupy it, but on Miss Winthrop's appearance the hall-porter whispered a word or two to the intruder. . . . But sooner or later in the evening, whatever diversion she had decreed, she was induced to sit down at the piano and play some sweet slow movement by Beethoven, or one of the less agile preludes of Chopin or the "Largo" by Handel. deed, the music-stool was as much her throne as the particular arm-chair, and no one ever touched the piano when Miss Winthrop was present, except by her special request. When she, however, was induced to favour the company, all conversation ceased or was conducted only in the discreetest of whispers. If it continued, Miss Winthrop ceased until it did. But this rarely happened: an automatic hush fell on the lounge at the first firm touch of her rather knobby hands. . . .

She had only just poured out her first cup of tea when Mr. Foster came out on to the lawn with his putter. Mr. Foster, a stout, middle-aged clergyman, was a great favourite of hers, and acted as her lieutenant in getting up diversions for the happy family. He was expecting a friend to come out for a match presently, and till then he practised, while Jessica watched him with advice and applause.

"Oh, padre, that was a good putt," she

said. "I shall never dare to play you again if you putt like that. . . Ah! Now you've done what you told me never to do: you were two yards short that time. Never up, never in: how that sums it up! Oh, but you've holed it, so you get your two. And here's Mr. Leader: now I shall enjoy seeing a match between you two."

Mr. Leader was a very different person from the padre. He was a gruff, unsociable sort of man, who had been known to refuse to go out of the lounge while they thought of a word, and once when he did go. he went to the smoking-room (for Jessica discouraged smoking in the hall) and refused to come back. But he was a new-comer. and she still hoped that he would fall into line. Just as they began their athletic tussle, the hotel-bus came back from the station, laden with an immense quantity of luggage, and there got out a tall stout woman, followed by another who was evidently her maid and carried a cushion and a rug and a jewel-case. Somehow Jessica distrusted the arrival: she was terribly smartly dressed with skirts that. considering her build, were unnecessarily short. She was smoking also, and that argued ill, and her immense quantity of luggage argued ill, and her maid argued ill. She might be nice enough, thought Jessica, but so much pomp was not quite the right note at the Crown. . . . Presently she would go to the visitors' book and see who this was.

She turned her rather distracted attention to the putting-match. The padre was in wonderful form, and Mr. Leader was getting grumpier and grumpier, in spite of Jessica's encouragement, which she showered on him for propitiatory reasons.

"Oh, Mr. Leader, that was hard luck!" she said. "The naughty ball! It ought to have gone in. And then the padre goes and lays you a stymie. No one can play against such bad luck. . . . There, that was a beautiful putt of yours. Well I never! If the padre hasn't holed out in one. . ."

Suddenly her stream of encouragement ceased, for from the open window of the lounge there came out the sound of brilliant roulades from the piano. It was some dreadful piece of ragtime music—which Jessica detested—all execution, and twirls and shakes and octaves. She sprang up, and nearly trod on Mr. Leader's ball.

"Who can that be?" she said.

"Hi! Fore!" said Mr. Leader. "Just

at your feet.... I shouldn't wonder if it was my sister-in-law. I believe she was to arrive to-day. Now we shall get some music."

Jessica hurried indoors with this blasphemy in her ears, and only pausing to see in the visitors' book that it was Mrs. Leader who had arrived just now, went into the

lounge.

There, without doubt, at the piano was the woman who had filled her with instinctive distrust, fireworking away all over the keys, with a cigarette in her mouth. . . . With only one moment for consideration, Jessica made up her mind what line to take, and sat down very stealthily nearest the piano, and assumed an expression of delighted gaiety. She gave little smiles and nods of her head in time to the music, and when the last distasteful chords had been played, she turned with her most winning expression to the pianist.

"Delicious!" she said. "Oh, what fun! Makes me want to dance. Thank you."

Mrs. Leader was unaware that she was being complimented by the Queen of the Crown, and saw in her only a rather ridiculous old thing with forced smiles on her acid face. As for her wanting to dance . . .

"Nice of you," she said. "What a

foul piano!"

Now Jessica had chosen that piano at the request of the manager some seven years ago. Her smile became a little wintry, like a gleam of sun on a day of north-easterly gale, and she reconsidered her policy.

"I am sorry you find it so," she said.
"Perhaps I am accustomed to it, for I like the touch. Please go on playing to

me. I adore music."

Mrs. Leader had already risen.

"No, it's your turn," she said quite amicably.

Jessica slid on to the music-stool. After all, it was her throne.

"Terribly out of practice," she said.
"A little Beethoven? Or Chopin? Or Handel? The 'Largo'?"

"Don't think I know it," said Mrs.

Leader.

Jessica made a pained face, which she dexterously transformed into one of pleasurable anticipation, and after that into a rapt expression, as she struck the first chord, of musical absorption. She closed her eyes, as her habit was.

Mrs. Leader found that she did know it, but that she didn't like it. Besides,

the woman couldn't play at all, and she wanted her tea. She did not mean to be rude, but as this famous piece went at a funereal pace, and the pianist's eyes were closed, she thought there would be time to slip into the hall, order her tea, and come back before it was over. But from the hall-door she saw her brother-in-law putting on the lawn, and forgetting about the musical treat inside, went out to greet him. Thus when Jessica, after dwelling on the last chord, opened her eyes again, she found herself alone, and felt sure that her instinctive distrust had been only too well founded. These dark forebodings—she was never wrong in her first impressions—were speedily and amply confirmed.

The visitors at the Crown were of a punctual habit with regard to dinner, and the meal was nearly over before Mrs. Leader made her entry. She dined with her brother-in-law, and by the time that they came out into the lounge, Jessica had already been persuaded to play. There were but few empty chairs, and Mrs. Leader, with a cigarette in her mouth, sat firmly down in Jessica's other throne, and talked. She must have been saying something amusing, for her brother-in-law gave his hoarse laugh and said "Capital, Edith: tell me another." Jessica, in consequence, as Edith proceeded to tell another, took her hands off the keys and waited with a wide, martyred smile. That impressive pause failed in its effect for once.

"It was too killing," said Edith. "There she was, looking precisely like the witch of Endor, with that silly old man. I never saw a woman—"

Edith became aware of the dead hush. "I'll tell you the rest afterwards, Toby," she said, and lit another cigarette.

Jessica proceeded with the slow movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, arranged for the piano, exactly where she had left off. Sighs and "thank you's" were breathed round the room at the end, and she rose and flitted away to where the padre sat with two elderly ladies.

"A little game of bridge, padre," she said, "to get into practice for to-morrow night's tournament? No, I won't be persuaded to play to you again. After Beethoven, what is there to play?"

Bridge had already begun, with whispered declarations, during the music, and the padre put his private piece of green baize on the slippery table.

"You played divinely to-night, Miss

Jessica," he said. "Tum-te-tum . . . won-derful music."

Jessica looked round for her chair and saw it was occupied. She gave her little sign to the hall-porter, who, rather diffidently, approached Mrs. Leader and whispered to her. at the wrong notes and raised her shrill voice.

"One club, did you say, padre?" she asked. "Now, partner, I shall be ever so reckless and say one spade. So naughty of me, but—oh, that music—but I shall expect to be scolded. Ah, my poor cars . . .



She rose.

"I'll play you that bit out of 'Foolish Virgins,' if you like," she said. "But a rotten piano . . ."

She seated herself at the despised instrument, and without preliminary broke into the scherzo of the ballet-music. She played sketchily and superbly, with quantities of wrong notes but a glorious sense of rhythm.... Jessica gave shivering winces

and you go two clubs, padre, after everybody has passed. Well—let me think if I can, but who can think with this—let me see, what is the right thing? I don't care: I shall go two spades. . . ."

In fact, this was not so much a declaration at bridge as a declaration of war. Red-mouthed, relentless war.

Jessica lay long awake that night invent-

ing tactics and planning manœuvres. She had observed with pain that Mrs. Leader's performance had given pleasure to the less musical members of the happy family: old Mrs. Ward, for instance, who was generally found to be asleep at the end of a Beethoven movement, had been sitting bolt upright in her chair and beating time on the arm of it with her fan: young Mr. Innes had applauded loudly at the end, and even the padre had said "Wonderful execution, surely." But difficulties never daunted

the lawn, and she went from one to the other.

"Good morning, Mrs. Ward," she said. "What a pianist we have among us now! But how impossible to play bridge, was it not, with those rivers of wrong notes? If Mrs. Leader plays to night during our tournament there will be a marked falling off in our play, I am afraid. . . Ah, Mr. Innes, you and I play bridge together to-night, I think. We really must secure a table away from the piano, or I am sure

I shall revoke. . . . Dear padre, going to have a round at putting? I wonder—you have such tact—if you could tell Mrs. Leader that we are very serious bridge-ites. Oh, dear me, there she is at

it again."

Brilliant and rollicking strains came from the window of the lounge, and Jessica, protesting that she could not

read her paper in that riot, retired to the sunless little garden on the other side of the hotel. But she found it cold there and came back. The lawn was completely empty, and looking into the lounge, she saw that it was full.

People came rather late in to lunch that day:

in fact there was hardly anyone there except Jessica and deaf Mrs. Antrobus till that meretricious hubbub from the lounge ceased. Directly Jessica had finished she tripped away to the piano and had a real good practice. Long before she finished, her fingers were aching, but she held on till four o'clock, at which hour she usually had tea.

She had hardly left the lounge when Mrs. Leader entered it from the garden-door. The piano-stool was rather low, and she sat



Jessica, they only developed her horse-power, and next day she went out to battle.

She had her bath and massage for her rheumatic wrist early, and returning from the establishment had the pleasure of cutting Mrs. Leader dead: the pleasure was only marred by the depressing suspicion that Mrs. Leader had not noticed it. She then sat down at the piano and, with her wrist in excellent order, played solidly for an hour. By that time there were many little groups of the happy family scattered about

on all Jessica's volumes of Beethoven. . . . Jessica hurried back again in order to pretend to write a letter, and then distractedly go away again, with pen, inkbottle and paper in her hand. She saw her music was not on the piano, where she had left it, and began hunting round the lounge for the melodious volumes. She looked high, and low and called the hall-porter to explain her loss. Not till then (apparently) did Mrs. Leader guess what she was looking for, and jumped up, saying:

"Oh, I'm afraid I'm sitting on them.

So sorry."

Jessica made the sort of smile which

frightens dogs.

I hope it won't inconvenience you too much if I take them away," she said. "So good of you. Many thanks, and apolo-

gies for troubling."

The witheringness of this sarcasm, for which, when goaded, Jessica was famous, had no effect on Mrs. Leader. "Slightly cracked," she thought to herself, and played chromatic scales for a quarter of an hour.

Jessica, trembling with passion but convinced she had inflicted a deep mortal wound, went up to her room. From the window of it she could just see the corner of the lounge where the piano stood. As soon as she observed that the music-stool was unoccupied, she hurried down again and played easy pieces of Mozart till it was time to rest before dinner. Then, by a brilliant inspiration, she locked the piano and hid the key in a brass vase of Benares workmanship. So that would insure them against any ear-splitting strummings during the bridge tournament.

Mrs. Leader, declining to take part in the bridge tournament, played a rather loud sort of patience with her brother-in-law, and when that was over she attempted to open the piano. But it was locked, the key was missing, and neither hall-porter nor manager nor lift-boy knew anything about it. But so long as there was no Beethoven possible, she did not much care,

and, being in want of an ash-tray, took the Benares vase off its shelf and found the key. She was an intelligent woman, and instantly guessed how it had got there. She pocketed it therefore, and on her way up to bed hid it on the top of an engraving of "The Monarch of the Glen" which hung in the corridor.

Jessica tripped into the lounge early next morning, with the intention, now that the bridge tournament had not been interrupted by distracting noises, of restoring the key to its place. But when she held the Benares vase upside down nothing fell into her hand but some burned-out cigarette-ends. This was both disgusting and disquieting, for she felt sure she had put the key there.

She washed her hands, and went off to her breakfast completely puzzled. Then she remembered that there was another vase of Benares ware at the further end of the shelf, and returned to see if it was there. She had to get on the sofa to reach this, and at that moment Mrs. Leader entered.

"Good morning," she said cheerfully. "Looking for the key of the piano? Have

you forgotten where you put it?"

These remarkable words gave Jessica quite a shock, and she had to steady herself against the shelf.

"I beg your pardon?" she said in her

iciest tones.

"Pray don't mention it. But it is annoying to have put something carefully away and to forget where you put it. Sunday too: we shan't have any of your delightful Beethoven."

Jessica dismounted from the sofa.

"I am quite at a loss to understand what you mean," she said.

"I'm afraid I can't explain myself more clearly," said Mrs. Leader.

She broke into a shout of good-natured

laughter.

"You put it on the top of the picture of 'The Monarch of the Glen," she said. "If you'll fetch it, let's sit down and have a duet. But no more hiding, mind!"



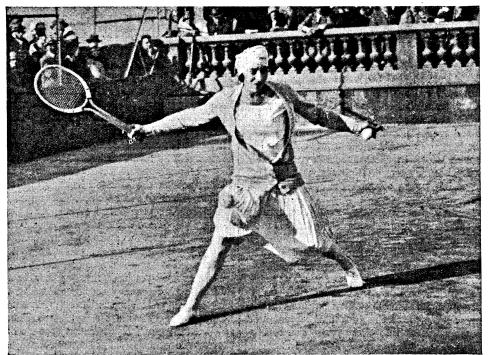


Photo by]

MDLLE, LENGLEN IN PLAY AT CANNES.

Sport and General.

"BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN!"

ADVICE TO SOME LAWN TENNIS PLAYERS

By SUZANNE LENGLEN

AM afraid I always feel a little diffident about writing on lawn tennis. I would a hundred times sooner play a dozen strenuous matches than write a dozen lines. And never have I felt less at ease than I do as I glance at the title of the article I have been asked to write.

But let me explain. It happened in this way. I was talking to a friend There was some lawn tennis going on at the time. I am afraid it was rather indifferent stuff, but

practical examples are always better than theory and we were using the game which was in progress to illustrate a few points.

Then, to my horror I realised, as he gravely pointed out, that I had torn the whole of one player's game to pieces! Really I hadn't intended to do anything of the kind. It just happened.

"From what I can see," said my companion, still in that grave voice which I felt concealed some amusement, "the best thing

that player could do would be to start all over again."

Well, then, having gone so far, and not wishing to be personal to the particular player on whom we had hung our criticisms, I had to say that I was afraid that that remark would apply to a very large number of the rank and file of players of to-day. Not the tournament class, of course, although there are exceptions even there; but to the average club player who, having got to one point, sticks there, practise how he or she may.

I said there were exceptions even among tournament players, and perhaps the average players of whom I write will forgive me more readily if I take my examples from high circles. I won't give the name, but I have no doubt that the player will be recognised by his friends all the same. He had a battery of formidable strokes, which carried him to the top of the tree, and looked like keeping him there. But one or two of the Wimbledon veterans shook their heads when they noticed the way that he executed a certain shot. They shook them still more when they noticed how he tried to avoid having to play that shot. They knew it was a weakness. Its method of execution was—I must say it—more than futile. used to shiver when I felt that he was going to have to play it. Yes, it was as bad as that!

Of course it wasn't long before more than one player began to search out that weakness. He covered it up finely for a long time, but at last he made up his mind.

He would learn that stroke all over again! Now just try to realise what that meant and you may forgive the critical remarks which you may feel are being directed at your own play. Here is a man, a champion and a world famous one, calmly deciding that, as far as one part of his game is concerned, he will go back to the A B C stage, and begin like the veriest beginner.

But not only that! I knew, and he knew that the difficult part of the task he had set himself was not going to be the learning of the new stroke, but the unlearning of the old one!

In spite of everything he persevered. With what result? With the result that for a whole season he put himself right out of the top class in lawn tennis! He who had been a master became a humble pupil. I believe that he would have gone through almost to the top, if not quite there, one year had he pursued his old tactics, covering

up the stroke when he could, and playing his old way—not an entirely unsuccessful way, mind, in spite of its being all wrong—when he was forced to.

But there was no falling from grace on his part. He watched other players execute that stroke; he went away "into the dunce corner," as he used laughingly to say, and practised it; then, coming on to the court, he religiously stuck to the correct way, though he played it with an awkwardness which you could yourself fairly feel—and he lost the honours he might have gained.

But for one year only! A winter's practice, and he came back, a giant armed with another fearsome weapon; a giant without that chink in his armour. And he won.

Now have I made my apologia? If not let me remind you that in my last article I told you of the weary struggle some of us, including myself all too surely, have had when trying to master some particular stroke. If I am frank it is because I know there is no other royal road to success. It is the advice I have had to give to my dearest friends, and have had to swallow myself, more than once, from that greatest of teachers, my father.

I am sometimes inclined to envy the players who are taking a racket up for the first time. To pity, as well as envy, sometimes, too. To envy if there is anyone at hand to put their first steps along the right road; to pity if I see them taking a path which they will surely have to retrace, and which they will most surely find more difficult on the return journey.

They tell me that it is difficult for a lawn tennis coach to make a living in England. This really surprises me very much. Lawn tennis lessons are not costly, and they are invaluable. People think nothing of paying as much as three guineas for a racket, and, invaluable as I know first-class implements to be, I would go so far as to advise a beginner who could afford only three guineas all told, to pay one guinea for a racket and take the other two to the nearest professional and ask what he would do for that amount. And the same remark applies to many a player who may be entering his or her second or even sixteenth season.

I was once talking to a great golf professional about the difference between the average amateur and the professional. Of course I know one is a man's job in life, and the other's mere recreation in most cases. But there are and have been amateurs who have spent as much time practising as many

professionals. Why, then, didn't they reach that consistency that the professional does? He had a rather queer and interesting remark to make. It sounds trivial, but it impressed me at the time. He had a golf

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MDLLE. LENGLEN'S FIRST PRACTICE AT WIMBLEDON THIS YEAR. 1

club in his hand, a new one, one of a hundred he had been "feeling" that morning in the shop, his new supplies having just arrived.

"I sometimes think," he said meditatively—he was a Scotsman—" that the fact that we're always handling clubs, all day through,

has something to do wi' it. You see, miss, a golf club gets to feel to me like part of myself. You sort of 'feel' it, rather than hold it, if ye see my meaning!"

I did! Who hasn't taken up a tennis

racket after a long absence from the court and felt one was holding an entirely unfamiliar thing?

And have you ever had that delightful feeling, when playing a game, that the racket was so perfectly under control that it was, as my Scottish friend said, a part o' ye?

Now to come to my point. You all know by this time and if you don't you can learn by watching the first good player you come across—how a racket should be held both on the forehand and the backhand. But do you hold it like that in actual play? Try it out and see. Now suppose you find you don't. Then do what one of my own countrymen did in his endeavours to correct a faulty hold. Carry a racket round with you, held in the proper manner, whenever you can. Swish at an imaginary ball with it. You can do it a dozen times a week, in semiprivacy, without falling under the suspicion of having got sunstroke, or something. My own countryman did it in his garden, and even his study, when he was memorising matter for an examination! He told me that it gave him that "feel" which I have mentioned. Simple advice, isn't it? But I feel that most of the best advice I have either received or given has been simple.

Don't think I am being wilfully unconventional in the next bit of advice I am going

to tender. I'll explain it as well as I can.

And it is: "Don't try to win every game you play in practice!"

But, you will say, surely the object of playing lawn tennis at all should be to win. Eventually, in some club, or even, I hope,

some national tournament, yes. Though even here, in another sense, the playing of the game is of far more import than the mere winning of the match.

What I mean is this. I watch club play from time to time, and I am always struck by one thing. The players are out for but one thing—a winning shot. How it is obtained doesn't seem to matter, though as an actual fact that is the one thing which does matter!

If you feel your game is wrong you must begin at the beginning. And in doing so you must remember that as a beginner you won't win many games. You are not out to win games, but to perfect your own game. With the opportunities of seeing good players which exist everywhere to-day the proper way of executing any stroke can easily be learnt. And there are few better ways of learning. Practise in front of a mirror at home. Practise against a wall. Tell yourself that although you did run to the final of the club handicap the other day you did it under false pretences.

Did you play every forehand stroke as you are playing it in front of the mirror Then it had no business to be a winner. Probably it was only the rotten play of your opponent that allowed you to win at all. And at any rate you didn't win in good style. Oh, yes, of course the score was in your favour, but do you remember that perfectly awful backhand stroke, which you intended to be a good-length ball, and which beat your opponent because you mishit and it just crawled over the net cord? That won you a critical point, didn't it? But was there an atom of satisfaction in it? If you can honestly say there was then you have never known the real spirit of this great game of ours. This article is not for you.

There must have been some strokes which you have played which have sent that glow of satisfaction through you which a workman, yes, even an artist, feels for a job well done. Never mind whether it was a winner or not. Think of that beautiful-length ball which, even as you were driving it, seemed certain to go just to the spot you intended it should. Wasn't there infinitely more satisfaction in it, even though your opponent got to it, and, by a fluke, drove it out of your reach?

Which brings me to another point. Never play without an object. Not even a single shot. Your object is, of course, to play it in good form up to now, but there is another

which you can, and should strive to attain at the same time. Aim always at some particular spot. Never be content with just "hitting the ball over the net." I take it that you are still busy trying to play the forehand stroke in the same way as Lacoste or Borotra or one of your own excellent examples plays it. Well, try at the same time to hit within, say, a yard of your opponent's backhand corner, and then within a yard of his forehand corner. Never mind the ball going out—but do mind it going into the net. A yard above the net, remember, is a hundred times better than an inch below it.

I always advise learning one stroke at a time, and that is why, I think, I have often found my advice to be unpalatable. You will tell me that it restricts your game, but if you will look at it the right way you will see that you have no business to be playing games at all—until you know how. You are not allowed to do jobs in the worka-day world until it is sure that you won't bungle them. Get somebody else, some other member of your club, into the same frame of mind as yourself, and practise Take turns to "feed" each other, and don't try to make every shot a winner. It wants patience, but then what in the world doesn't, if it is worth doing at all?

There is no objection, by the way, and I had better make this clear at this point, to your hitting hard. You will naturally get a lot of pace on your ball if you swing correctly. Don't strive too much after speed, however, or you will sacrifice the style and form of which, I take it, you are now in full pursuit. Don't, then, hit too softly, or you may make a habit of it. But don't hit wildly. There's a vast difference.

Of course I know that in spite of anything I may say you will play games, and so I may as well offer you a little advice on what to do while you-are going through the painful process of starting all over again. be selfish. I watched a game the other day and for a while I couldn't quite make out what was going on. Then I realised that, without having made, apparently, any mutual arrangement to do so, one of the players was practising a perfectly execrable backhand stroke, which went time after time into the net or miles out of court, while his unfortunate opponent loafed about and got a lot of practice—picking balls out of the netting!

Play, in games then, the shots which are possible for you to play without your revert-

ing to any of the strokes which you are discarding. Ask for the position, in doubles, which suits you best, for here you will be able to be of more assistance to your partner. And, if there is practice to be obtained of the sort I have suggested—and I think you will find plenty of fellow-members who only need approaching—be content with one set of real games.

Another point. I have asked you to take opportunities of watching good players so that you may model your new style on

and brilliancy are, on his day, synonymous terms. There are scores of his strokes which you may copy with profit; but don't copy that service unless you have very special qualifications for doing so. It is his own personality, that and nothing else, that fearsome stroke of his. I don't suppose anybody in the world could copy it successfully.

There is another little point on "Beginning again" on which I think advice might not be out of place. Whenever I see the

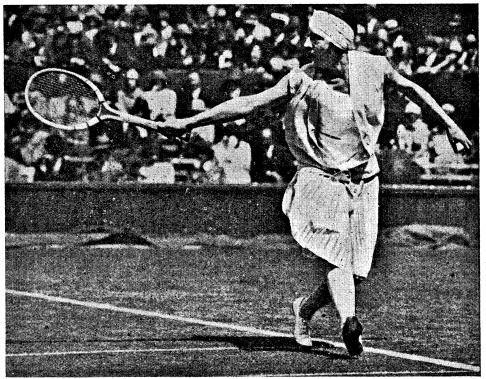


Photo by]

MDLLE, LENGLEN v. MISS MARY K. BROWNE AT WIMBLEDON.

[Topical.

theirs. But be careful about the choosing of your model.

Even Wimbledon is not an absolutely safe hunting-ground for a model. There are men who have achieved a certain measure of success there, yes, who have even won championships, yet an attempt on your part to try to copy their style would result, almost certainly, in the complete ruin of your game.

Who, for instance, could get results in the way Jean Borotra does except himself? Yet what magnificent results he does get with that diverting service of his. Borotra way some players stand about or move about on a tennis court some words I heard years ago recur to me. I don't know who said them, but it was probably my father. "About fifty per cent of the game is played with your head; about ten per cent with your racket—and about forty per cent with your feet!"

It is in this department of the game, I think, that you can most easily perceive the difference between the first-class and the second-class players. It is astonishing to me, this, because surely it is easiest of all to learn to move about. Far easier, at any

rate, than the learning of a stroke like the backhand. If you are one of the players who "take root" on the court, dig yourself up and improve your game fifty per cent by learning to move into position the moment you have finished your stroke.

Sometimes the lawn tennis writers have a lot to say about what they have at times called my "uncanny sense of anticipation" as to where my opponent is going to send her return. Really there's nothing of second sight or anything like that in it. If I may for once talk about myself I know that I move about more than most players, but I think that any success I achieve is because I begin to move earlier than most players seem to—that is as soon as I have played

my shot. I start to move to whatever part of the court I have had to leave most open, and the ball most frequently, and quite naturally, comes to that spot. Even if I am not moving from the spot where I played the last shot, I move about on it. I keep on my toes, dancing if you like, and always balanced as well as possible so that I can move either to right or to left, to front or to rear. That is largely what that "uncanny sense" is made up of.

Finally, you must practise, and, however difficult it may be—and difficult it will be—you must not fall back on the old strokes. Lose points rather than style. You will be able to pick up the one later on, but if you drop the other you will be on the way to

losing it for ever.



WINDING WAYS.

YOU never can be sure
With twisty roads like these—
They may lead you towards the moor,
To the heather and the bees;
Or, growing steep and stiff,
They might hurry you away
To the sheer edge of the cliff,
And the foam that breaks in spray.

You never can be sure—
I warn you, take good care,
Lest they your steps allure
To a castle in the air:
Oh, I who have been mocked,
I hold these roads to blame,
For the castle-door was locked
By one I will not name!

MAY BYRON.



HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

By HYLTON CLEAVER

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE

N summer, London is at its best about the middle of the afternoon.

Shop-blinds are prettily unfurled; the

Shop-blinds are prettily unfurled; the sun shines on the well-swept roadways; prowling taxis are converted into open cars. On such an afternoon Sam Morrison walked in agreeable humour with the world. There was indeed not one thing wrong with Sam, unless it was that he had nobody to love. He was a man so honest, unaffected and obliging that he deserved someone to love, and he was conscious of it.

It was not that he wanted company, for he was now with Rutherford. Nor was it that he longed to find a perfect peach and dance his shoes away on some extensive floor. He just felt he would like to know someone to whom he could take lots and lots of flowers.

The afternoon had not had that effect on Rutherford.

He was looking, as he generally was, for somebody with whom to quarrel. For two pins he would have entered Hyde Park, solely to insinuate himself into a meeting and dispute the point. He was a lean-faced man who walked with hands behind him, stick beneath one arm, and shoulders slightly stooping.

These two had turned off Oxford Street and had come to a residential area, when Rutherford stopped short and gripped Sam

by the arm.

A man was singing in the street.

The sight was not unusual, but you would have remarked this much: this man appeared extraordinarily genteel. His clothes were worn, but they were darned with almost ostentatious neatness with a needle. His boots, though down at heel, had been rubbed up until they shone now like the countenances of two very honest men. He wore a pair of dark grey woollen gloves, and, as though this were meant to be the hall-mark of respectability, he actually wore a hatguard on his bowler-hat. As he turned slowly to look up at windows he disclosed the fact that he wore pince-nez rather low upon his nose. The words he sang were unintelligible, but such tune as there was suggested that a central figure in the song had died.

"You see that fellow," Rutherford said in a curious tone. "Why, look here, he was having lunch quite close to us!"

As they had lunched particularly well,

Sam peered more closely.

"By Jove, I believe you're right!"

"I am right. He was just below the window and the sun was shining in and lighting up his pate. I said he must be sitting there to give us the impression of a What's more, Sam, he had a very good lunch too."

"He did," said Sam, looking intently at e other. "I recollect we said so."

Rutherford was now beginning to look rather like a vulture, in which he was helped by features and physique. Words seemed to fail him. He was struggling to express his anger in the proper imprecation, but without avail. A sound like "Tcha!" came forth, then, with a choke, a sound like " Pah!"

He was a man who liked an argument; now he had happened on a row. He suddenly burst out: "A hypocrite in mended clothes! A FAKE! Look here, I'll tackle him!"

All in a moment he was hurrying out into the road, menace in every line of him; he caught the little man up with a rush, and, as he turned, the singer was a study. He

did not look confused; he did not turn a little nasty; he merely looked a trifle pained. His pale blue eyes looked round at Rutherford above the rims of his pince-nez, and then he lifted one hand and began to feel his chin. He was so perfectly respectable it seemed absurd that anyone should doubt his bona fides.

"I beg your pardon, sir!"

"I saw you lunching close to me! It cost you three and sixpence at least, perhaps five shillings. Then you slink off into another district and sing in the street. You fraud!"

"Fraud? Dear me, no!"

"You are a fraud! A man's entitled to assume that anyone who walks about the street and sings is in distress."

"Well, I am in distress. And, after all, I

have a not unpleasant voice."

"You have a most unpleasant voice."

"D'you think so, sir? I'm sorry."

Rutherford waved his hand towards the other's polished boots; he pointed at the hat-guard.

"What's all this? A studied stock-intrade. You have deliberately dressed the part. You want them to suppose you are a faded gentleman still clinging to the habits of a lifetime. FAKE!"

He spat the last word as if it were a

The genteel little man began now to look rather awkward. He had coloured, and he looked about in apprehension. "Really, sir . . ." he began.

"Don't really me! I shall give you in

charge. Sam, fetch a policeman!"

"No, sir, I beg you," said the singer. " Please!"

"Sam, fetch a policeman!" Rutherford was definite.

This time the singer gulped; and then he clutched at Rutherford and said: "You're quite mistaken, sir; indeed you I have a daughter ill in bed at home."

To Rutherford that was the last straw. He leaned closer, narrowing his eyes. lip had curled.

A WHAT?"

"A daughter, who's an invalid."
"Very well," Rutherford replied, and paused before he fired his final shot. friend here is a doctor. We'll come and see your daughter, now."

Sam started violently, but Rutherford was in command. "How would you like

that, eh?"

"All right, sir," said the other. "We will go at once."

Before Sam knew it, he was following behind, exceedingly annoyed. He hated scenes. He looked at Rutherford as he drew back, and took Sam's arm.

"The whole thing is a plant. He'll never

take us there."

"Maybe," said Sam indignantly, "but saying I'm a doctor. That's all right. What if he finds out that I'm not?"

"He won't. There isn't any daughter."
"I don't know what you think I am."

"I think you are the kind of helpless idiot," said Rutherford, "that all these people look for. And I know I'm not."

The three of them went quickly on. The genteel little man, smoothing his gloves in turn, jerked also at the setting of his coat.

"I'm sorry you should think I am a fake.

I don't like that at all."

"You had a lavish lunch," insisted Rutherford. "You ate it like a glutton. Rich meat and strong red gravy. If you are not a fake, who is?" He glanced down irritably, and snapped his jaws together. "Do up your boot-lace," he said all at once.

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JANE DENTON lay in bed.

Her hands were folded comfortably behind her head; her knees rose up into a pinnacle beneath the sheets. Her eyes, which were dark blue, and long, looked out upon the sky which showed above the house-tops.

She had been given one day's holiday, and for the first time in her life she had made up her mind to spend that day in bed. nature she was not a drone. She was a valued and efficient secretary; she had a business head, and, which is more, could overcome the disadvantage good looks are to any one intent on making use of such a head so that declining years shall not be barren. But the trial of it was, she had a father on her hands who was a sheer responsibility. True, he amused himself by going round the public libraries and reading. At times he had made pocket-money through all this research by sending paragraphs to weekly papers, but Jane did not benefit by that. Her father was a grafter, and she alone kept him in order. The little house in which they lived, also the furniture, was theirs; but since his wife had died, and Jane had been found worthy of a helpful salary, he had done nothing much but make a regular appearance at meal-time in the evening.

It was extremely gratifying now for Jane,

who had a troublous time, to lie in bed for once, and she was getting full enjoyment from the treat when her ears caught the turning of a key in the hall door. A moment later she could hear the door close, then a footstep on the stairs; but she heard something else, and she sat up and stayed with tilted head, for there were voices. It seemed to her that there were many people all ascending at the same time, in a crowd; and as they came they argued.

She felt as Alice must have felt in Wonderland when Bill the Lizard was sent up to clear her from the chimney. Someone knocked. In an uncertain and astonished voice she answered: "Yes, who's there?"

Then the door opened and her father put a frightened face around it. He stayed there with lifted brows. It was a curious attitude he struck, a little reminiscent of a spy in farcical comedy. Jane eyed him without comprehension; his pince-nez were nearly slipping off his nose; one hand was lifted to his teeth, to tap upon them.

"Someone is here," he said, "to see you,

dear. Lie still."

Next moment he was roughly edged aside; the door was opened wider, and two men stood on the threshold, hats in hand. They seemed amazed to see her there at all. Who they were Jane had not the foggiest idea. She could not get the hang of things at all. The first man had a lean face and he looked as if he got but little light and laughter out of things. He fixed his eyes upon her in a hostile and suspicious way, then waited, with his head stuck forward. At his side stood Sam; you will know how he looked.

After awhile Jane slowly sat up with the sheets held round her neck, turned to her father breathlessly, and asked him:

" Well ? "

"These gentlemen," he answered in a halting voice, for he had hoped they would not get so far, "have come to see if they can help us, dear. I had explained to them," he added earnestly, "that you were ill in bed."

"You told them what?"

Two spots of vivid pink were showing in her cheeks. She could still not understand all this, but Rutherford came nearer.

". You are an invalid, it seems. I have a doctor here. Perhaps you'll tell him," he concluded threateningly, "what your trouble really is."

Jane turned her eyes indignantly on Sam, but it is difficult to draw yourself to your full height unless you can stand up to do it. She did her best, and Sam, who had begun to shuffle and was ready to be friends, observed with much regret the offer would not be appreciated. Seldom had he seen such

Next moment an extraordinary thing had happened. Sam had returned, and he was half-way back into the room. His cheeks were flushed; he pointed with his hat.

"And you," said he, "get out."
There was a moment's striking

silence.

"What?" said Rutherford.

"Get out. If you say one word more, I'll sling you down these stairs.

You didn't come here to insult the girl."

The other's mouth was opening slowly. Sam tapped himself upon the chest. "I am the doctor. I'll see

"'These gentlemen,' he answered in a halting voice, for he had hoped they would not get so far. 'have come to see if they can help us, dear. I had explained to them,' he added earnestly, 'that you were ill in bed.'"

a jolly countenance, or such long eyes. Yet his smile froze upon his lips as this girl looked him up and down.

"A doctor! Nothing of the kind. Go out. And when you've gone out, kindly leave this house exactly as you found it." She was distinctly breathless, but she looked resolute and firm. "Father, stop here. I want to speak to you."

But Rutherford refused to go. He stabbed

towards her with his finger.

"It's all a plant, you see. He says you are an invalid, and, all the time, you're not." His voice was sinister. "Now you get up and dress immediately, and go and look for work!"

her here alone." He pointed at the father. "You stop here."

A moment later Rutherford had backed outside, and Sam had shut the door. With his back to it, he turned round. The girl still sat there, with the sheets held up about her neck in blank amazement. Sam moved towards her, sat down gingerly, and put his hat upon the floor.

"Now," he said solemnly, "what is all

this?"

"That is exactly what I'd like to know. It looks to me like perfect impudence. I have a day off from the office, and a man I don't know bursts in and tells me to go and look for work!"

Sam nodded understandingly.

"The whole thing was, we found your

father singing in the street."

Now the girl slowly turned her head. She fixed her eyes upon her father with forbidding calm. The little man was leaning back against the wall, twisting his hat round in his fingers, and watching her with apprehension.

"Have you," she said, "been doing that

again?"

It was exactly as though he, a naughty

pup, had eaten half a slipper.

Her voice was pained. "You told me you were going to the library. How long has this been going on?"

"Only a day or so. I was a little short of ready money, and I didn't want to bother

you."

"Why did you tell them I was ill?"
"What else was I to say?" He leaned against the wall, half sulking, and his tone was querulous. "They said that they would call the police, and then when I was in despair I thought that you were staying here to-day, in bed, and I could tell them

The girl swung round and faced her father.

would call the police, and then when I was in despair I thought that you were staying here to-day, in bed, and I could tell them you were ill. When they said they would come and see, I thought I might just save my face if they should find you here. I

hoped they wouldn't come so far."

"How kind of you," said Jane. She turned to Sam, as though annoyed to have to offer any explanation to so miserable a character as he. "Some years ago he did this once before. He promised that he never would again. I have to make enough for



"'You told them what?'"

brought to him. Then, lo, a few hours afterwards we find him singing in the street, and my friend got annoyed."

two, and he amuses himself going round the libraries. At least I thought he did. Sometimes he has a craving for good things, and he's found out that if he dresses properly he can appeal to people in the street on account of gentility. He wouldn't get a penny if he went in rags. It's graft, that's all. I don't know what to do with him."

Sam hesitated, then bent for his hat.

"I don't know what you think of us."

"Not very well," said Jane.
"Quite so." He paused again. After all, it had not been his idea. It seemed a little hard. She looked extraordinarily sweet, still sitting up in bed, like the Princess Victoria when she was roused to be a queen. Will you tell me your name?"
"You'd better go," said she, endeavouring

to keep a level voice. "I shouldn't keep

your friend."

"I just thought I would like," he said, "to write a letter to you after I got home and make it clear that I was sorry."

"If you go now," said Jane, "I will dismiss the matter from my mind."

"I'm not sure that I want you to."

He waited interestedly. "What is your name?"

Now Jane sat up; she was aware that she could not be looking at her best, and it was time this interview was over.

"Please will you go?" she said indignantly. He did so with a downcast mien. But at the door he saw the little man. "I'll see you afterwards."

A quiet voice from the bed said: "No, you won't."

Sam made no answer. He went out and

shut the door. He went downstairs. Rutherford met him in the hall. He was indignant.

"Well, I suppose you gave her half a

sovereign?"

Sam simply ushered him out by the front door, then, from the step, glanced up and took the number of the house.

"I wonder," he said, "if there is a florist's near?""

"A florist's? Is she so bad we shall want a wreath?"

Poor Rutherford stayed rooted to the spot. He was unnoticed by Sam, who went quietly on. For a long time the other stayed still staring as though he could not believe his But Sam was simply looking for someone who could direct him to the shops. The board "To Let" which had been stuck up by him in his vacant heart had suddenly He had found somebeen taken down. body to whom he could take lots and lots of flowers.

Within her room, however, Jane, bounding from the bed in blue pyjamas and dragging on a dressing-gown, faced her apologetic father as he leaned against the wall.

"How could you?"

He observed her stamp her foot; he hoped this was a sign she was not going to cry.

"Oh well, I'm sorry. It was silly, I suppose; but people give, you know, quite freely to a man like me. I meant it for the best."

"But you weren't doing it for me!" cried Jane. "You're doing it entirely for yourself, without a word to anyone, just to get better meals than I can give you here. It's mean. It's horrid of you."

Her father raised his eyebrows in a pained way, shrugged his shoulders, and turned to go out. He had begun to tap his pocket for

a cigarette.

"It was the lean chap who made all the The chap who spoke to you had nothing much to say. He seemed all right."

"He didn't seem all right at all!" cried Jane excitedly. "I hated him!" And in another moment wondered what she meant by that.

III.

A FEW days had gone by, and Sam was

He felt that he had not been fairly treated. Flung into a trying situation not of his selection, he had tried to ease it and construct his exit afterwards with grace. But what was the result? He had had flowers of all sorts taken to this house and they had always been returned. He had called twice in person; nobody had been at home. He had called in the evening and the little man had drawn aside a curtain and waved at him earnestly to go away. Not wishing to become a common pest, Sam had with deep regret acceded. But he was not going to He was in love. The thing he had be done. desired had happened. Why must be not develop it? He was concerned about this girl. She palpably required a holiday, otherwise she would not have spent her one day's rest in bed. Yet he could not get her to speak to him; he was convinced that she would angrily tear up a cheque even if he were so misguided as to send one. He could conceive only one other method he could try. It would be some species of holiday for her no doubt if he removed her father for awhile. A man like that must put years on a girl; if she could only feel he were not knocking round, she might be able to enjoy herself, for one week anyway. That

seemed to be the scheme. He must remove the father.

And so he made his way deliberately to Jane's dwelling-place, and hung about within sight of the house. Two hours went by. Just before lunch, the genteel little character came out, his pince-nez sloped upon his nose, and went off primly down the street. Sam added himself on. He trailed him closely until they were round the corner, then reached out a detaining hand. The little man jumped round, and stood there blinking up. "Why," he began, "I say, you oughtn't

to be here, you know. Jane would be very

angry."

"Jane," Sam replied. "So that's it. Jane." He nodded gratefully, then looked about him artfully, and drew the little man against the wall. And having got him there,

he slapped his back quite suddenly.

"So I've found you at last. Thank goodness. D'you know what it is, my lad? Why, you and I are kindred spirits!" He "Yes, I know stood back with bright eyes. what it is with you. You're like myself. When I saw you attacking all that lunch, I You like decent living. So do I." He hit the little man again, and this time his hat wobbled. "I mean to go away," he added, "for a week. And I want you to come with me. Your taste and my taste are exactly on a par. We'd have a great time, you and I. I'm going to take you to the seaside for a week, entirely as my guest."

The little man appeared dumbfounded, but as the truth sank in, his eyes assumed an interested light. At last he lifted them

to Sam. "Your guest?"

"Yes, I want company. And I've formed the opinion you and I would hit it off. know exactly what was prompting you to go and sing to raise the money for one real good meal. It's palate. I can understand that, because I'm the same myself."

The little man looked down. He looked to either side. He looked behind him.

"WHAT?" he said strangely. Sam made the situation clearer.

"But," said the other, "what about my

daughter?"

"That's just it. What I suggest is that you come away with me without a word, and when we get down to the coast and have put up at some respectable hotel where there's a decent kitchen, you wire to her and follow with a letter to explain. The odds are she'll put on her hat and come down there to fetch you back. Right-o. When

she comes down, I'll pay your bills up for a week ahead, and then come back and leave you there together."

The little man looked round him as before. "Good gracious," he replied at last. "I'll meet you later and advise you what I think."

That evening, Jane waited for her father to come in to supper till her patience was exhausted; then, with a puckered brow, she carried on alone. At eight there came a

"Am here with Mr. Morrison.... Quite safe." The hotel and the town were

Jane read these words through several times. Next morning she wired to the office, and took train herself to join her father, and to fetch him home.

IV.

"You don't quite understand," said Sam.

"You don't. Now do you?"

He had said that repeatedly. So far it had had no effect. Jane, prettier and pluckier than ever, sat beside him in a coat and skirt, but with her back turned.

He was deeply hurt. His heart was throbbing. He was dry about the throat. His brow was creased, and his hands were clasped emphatically on his lap as he leaned forward looking at her all the time.

But Jane sat coldly still.

Her father, flushed with one good evening, which he had seen to its conclusion sitting on a couch with feet up and occasionally reaching for a glass beside him, had like a truant boy been sent upstairs to pack. Rebellious for a moment, he had ultimately gone. But Jane might have been made of stone.

All Sam could see were the curled lashes of her long eyes in the most delicate silhouette

you can imagine.

"You have to give a fellow credit sometimes," he insisted, "for not being absolutely The obvious isn't always what was meant. You jump to wild conclusions, and that isn't fair. I've told you I intend to go."

"You wanted," Jane observed, speaking at last, "to have me under an obligation. Well, things are hard enough. You might

have let the matter drop."
"True," Sam replied. "I might. And if a man was drowning, I might walk along the river bank and say, 'I'll let that pass.'"

He stayed a brief while staring at the floor

regretfully.

"You seem to think," he blurted out in due course, "I am anxious to annoy you. It seems a lot of trouble to have gone to to achieve a rather simple aim."

"I don't think you are anxious to annoy me. I think that you want to ingratiate

yourself."

"But why? You've made it obvious that you dislike me. If I am just an average sort of fellow, and not wholly idiotic, why should I want to make you miserable as well?"

"I don't dislike you," Jane retorted.

"Worse, then," said Sam. "I'm just a man of whom you don't take any notice."

"Not at all."

He answered: "Yes, at all." For he was getting rather cross.

"I think you mean it well enough, but

you're misguided."

"Then," Sam replied, "direct me. It's harder to offer help to you than it is for you to accept it." He took a sidelong glance, then sat back suddenly, his eyes examining the ceiling. All at once he was ready. He was tired of defending and explaining his behaviour. Now he was going to attack. "Do you know what it is? You're obstinate and selfish. You are hide-bound by some ridiculous convention. You see everything so narrowly that you can't credit anyone with having decent instincts. I come across you quite by chance. I do my best to straighten out an awkward situation, and then I spend days thinking out how I can help. At last, because you're just abominably rude to me each time I call, I have to make my own plans, and I put them into operation; straightway you come down and abuse me, because I tried to interest your father. If he's in second childhood, as he seems to be, will you cure him of that by binding him with promises to sit about the whole day waiting for you to come home? That's the way in which you will aggravate the trouble. I offered to amuse him. you suppose I chose him because he was cheerful company? I chose him," he concluded with assumed wrath, "to assist the main idea. To help. The only thanks I get is that you sit there with your back turned and refuse to speak to me."

At last she faced him.

He could have sworn her lips were quiver-

To save your pride," he said, "you make your mind up to deny your father simple pleasures which won't cost you twopence. Great Scot, have I offered gold to you?

What is my sin? I just can't make you understand that I mean decently."

She looked down slowly at her gloves.

"I know you do."

There was a silence after that. Sam was a little winded. Jane was dumb. They did not look at one another. Sam, with lifted eyebrows, stared intently at a placard. Jane counted fingers on her gloves. At last Sam cleared his throat.

"Very well, then," said he.

She made no answer.

"Do what I ask," he pleaded. "Stop down here with your father, and let me go back."

"I can't stop here with him."

"Why not? Is it the office? When's your holiday? Send them a medical certi-

"Oh, all that doesn't matter. I could take my holiday now, if I liked. It's due. All that could be arranged."

"Then, for the love of Mike, arrange it." She hesitated, and then at last she swung

round and, excitedly, she said:

"I can't! I can't! It's getting on my nerves. I'm with him all day long, and I want change. I want somebody else to talk to. I want someone who can see fun in things, and I want games. I wouldn't take my holiday when it was offered me because I couldn't bear to go away alone with him. The thing would drive me silly. And yet you keep on begging me to do that same thing now!"

Sam leaned towards her strangely.

had stiffened.

"You can't stop alone with him?"

She jumped up in a temper, stamped her foot, and, for one moment, faced him, in exasperation.

"Don't you keep saying you'll go BACK

. . . and leave us here?"

"Surely you want me to go back?"

"Of course I don't!" Her voice was rising helplessly. "If it's to be a holiday, then I want you to stay . . . stay here, and talk to me. Take me out of myself, and make the holiday a thing I can remember! Goodness me, has no one any sense?"

Sam remained absolutely immobile. watched her as she walked away in petulance. She stood beside a window, and he got up at last and walked towards her, but she swung off, and went and stood elsewhere. Something about her shoulders seemed to inform him that she was not quite herself. He stayed with one hand lifted to his tie. Then on the stairs he heard a footstep. He looked round. The little man was coming miserably downstairs, dragging step by step behind him one large bag; the bumps it made were like the ticking of a clock. Sam went towards him in two giant strides and reached out one hand.

"Go back!" he hissed. "Go back, I

tell you, and unpack!"

The little man gazed for one moment, then simply turned and went, uncomprehending, comatose.

Then Sam looked round for Jane. She was still at the second window, but he saw

she had raised a finger and was drawing solemnly upon the window-pane, so this time he approached with more determination, and she did not move away.

Sam lifted his hand and began to draw

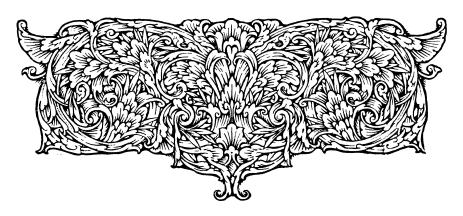
upon the window nearest him.

He drew from right to left, and she from left to right. And in that way it happened that their fingers met. And having met, they stopped.

Presently there was heard one sigh that

sounded practically a duet.

There's no doubt love is wonderful.



THE CAVE.

THERE was a man who lived in a cave
Deep down deep in the earth—
"This life," he said, "is an evil grave
From birth to death and death to birth,
And dark with melancholy;
And a senseless thing is your childish mirth,
For laughter is folly, folly!"

Outside his cave the sun came up,
And the world went summer-mad;
The mower drained his cider-cup,
And the little merry farmer's lad
Thanked God for the jolly weather,
And the small birds sang their matins glad
Like the Sons of God together!

The wind came calling over the lea

"Come out and see the day!"

"Nay! Truth lives here in the cave with me,"

Quoth the man. So the light wind blew away

And left him to his repining,

And Life passed over him, splendid and gay With its showers and storms and shining.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

WHY MR. DUMPHRY WAS NOT CHARGED WITH MANSLAUGHTER

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LENDON

R. CRITTLE had a shop in the High Street. He bought and sold antique furniture. He employed men skilled in the repair, not to say the creation, of antique furniture. He also possessed a pantechnicon and did removals as a side line. He generally got the first prize for sweet peas at the local Horticultural Show, but such were the product of his leisure hours.

Mr. Dumphry was a customer of Crittle's. It was Crittle and his men who had erected the musicians' gallery in Mr. Dumphry's studio. If there was any important sale in the neighbourhood Mr. Crittle attended it, and generally speaking it was better and more healthy to get Mr. Crittle to bid for

you than to bid for yourself.

Now it chanced that there was an auction sale at a great house in the neighbourhood and Mr. Dumphry procured for himself a catalogue. There was one item which struck him particularly. The catalogue devoted special enthusiasm and an illustration to it. This was a large bow-fronted Sheraton sideboard, unusually elaborate and declared to be a perfect period piece. It was also Lot 102. Mr. Dumphry was innocent of any knowledge of Sheraton or of the prices that such things would be likely to fetch, but he thought he might take a chance. So on his way to the station one morning he looked in at Mr. Crittle's shop.

"Going to the sale to-morrow?" asked

Mr. Dumphry.

"I am, sir. Though I'm afraid most of it will be over my head. Can I do anything for you there, sir?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dumphry. "I'd like you to buy me Lot 201 for £5 or less if

possible. The usual commission of course."

"Very good, sir," said Crittle, and read out the entry that he made in his notebook. Lot 201 for Mr. Dumphry. Limit £5.' That right, sir?"

"Quite right," said Mr. Dumphry, which

of course it wasn't.

On his return from town on the following day Mr. Dumphry again called in at Crittle's shop.

"Well, Crittle," he said, "did you manage

to get that thing for me?"

"I did, sir," said Crittle, "and I got it cheap. Nobody seemed to want it. Four-

and-six was all I had to pay."

For a moment Mr. Dumphry's brain reeled. There had clearly been a mistake somewhere. Suddenly he recalled that he had said Lot 201, and of course it was Lot 102. There was no great harm done. It was not necessary for him to give himself away.

"Good," he said. "Have you got the

thing here?"

"No, sir," said Crittle. "Shan't get it till to-morrow. But I can tell you all about it. It's white wood and I should think was made about 1850. Quite nicely made, too, but the paint's perished and of course none of the bottles are there. And some of the fittings will want repairing. Underneath the stand for the bottles are the two drawers, the top one I take it for pills and such, and the lower one for lint and bandages and so on."

And thus did Mr. Dumphry become aware that he had unwittingly bought an early Victorian medicine-chest.

"It's not a big thing, I suppose?"

"Oh, no. You could tuck it under one arm and carry it easy. If you find you'd

care to have it done up I could make a job of it. I might even be able to replace the bottles—I've got a lot of old stuff in that line."

"Well," said Mr. Dumphry, "I'll look in to-morrow and fetch the thing. I don't quite know what I'm going to do with it. By the way, how did that Sheraton side-

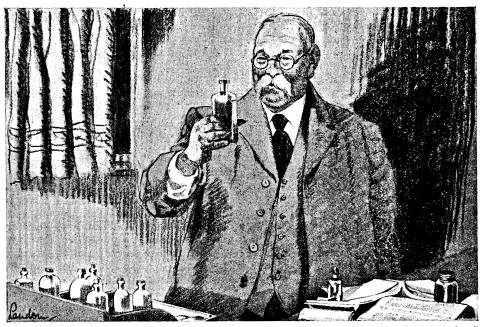
board go?"

"Eighty-four pounds and the man who got it was lucky. He'll make more than that when he comes to sell it. If I could have afforded to tie up as much money as that myself, I'd have bought it. Beautiful thing, that was. Beautiful."

not yet quite made up my mind how I shall use it. I might knock the stand for the bottles off the top of it, have it repainted, reline those two drawers, and use it for a collection of some kind."

"And very suitable," said the indulgent Crittle. "No doubt you'll let me know, sir, when you've made up your mind. I could do a lot with a thing like that. I could give it quite a handsome appearance, and make it worth twice as much as you laid out on it."

"Well, well," said Mr. Dumphry, "I'll think it over. If I decide to have anything done to it I shall let you know."



"Late in the evening came the finished product, somewhat treacly in consistency and dark brown in colour."

When Mr. Dumphry came to inspect the treasure which he had inadvertently acquired he was disappointed. It was dusty, dirty, and dilapidated. And Mr. Dumphry detested dust, dirt, and dilapidation.

"It doesn't look up to much," he said.

"Well, sir," said Crittle cheerfully, "if it had have done you wouldn't have got it for four-and-six. It wants doing up, of course. A pound or so spent on it would make all the difference in the world. It's good work. Look at the way them two drawers run. They used to make things fit in those days."

"Very well," said Mr. Dumphry, "wrap it up and I'll take it back with me. I've

"Thank you very much, sir," said Crittle.
Mr. Dumphry carried the little chest home and without even taking the paper from it, deposited it in the box-room. At present there was nothing about it which fired his imagination in the least.

On Saturday afternoon Mr. Dumphry clasped his new pair of sécators and went out to prune the La France roses. This is not a thing that you can safely leave to a jobbing gardener. No, indeed.

The first thing that Mr. Dumphry pruned was the little finger of his left hand. He wrapped his handkerchief round it and returned to the house demanding sticking-plaster. Mrs. Dumphry had at one time

possessed sticking-plaster, but it was her belief that somebody must have borrowed it. Queenie had none. Barbara had none. Finally an appeal was made to the kitchen and the cook was able to oblige.

"I must say," said Mr. Dumphry, "that I think this is something of a scandal. ought really to be provided with simple remedies in case of such an emergency as this. In the old days the practice was almost universal. About, say, 1850. Every decent household maintained its medicinechest, constructed very often with a stand on top of it for bottles and the two drawers underneath for pills and lint and so on. They were quite simply made of course, but there was workmanship in those days. They were well made. The drawers were beautifully fitted. You could open and shut them with a touch of one finger. I must see if I can't arrange something of the kind. Suppose the cook had had no stickingplaster. For all I know I might have bled to death."

"Oh, no," said Queenie. "I went through the First Aid thing, you know. I should have stuck a tourniquet on your arm and you would have been as right as rain."

"But that does not alter my contention. We should be prepared. Accidents happen every day. A few useful drugs should be kept in readiness. I shall see what I can do about it."

That night in the solitude of his study he took down the Encyclopædia and looked up the article headed "Digestion." It took him some time to get through it because whenever he came upon a word which he did not understand—and this occurred frequently—he got out another volume of the Encyclopædia and looked up that word. By the time that he had finished he felt that science had little more which it could teach him, and regretted that he had not embraced the medical profession in his youth.

On the following day Mr. Dumphry carried back the medicine-chest to Mr.

Crittle's shop.

"Well, Crittle," said Mr. Dumphry, "I have made up my mind. I intend to use this medicine-chest simply as a medicine-chest."

"Not for me to comment," said Crittle, but that seems to me a very wise decision. What more convenient than a medicine-chest? You blow your hand off through a gas explosion, or you dip your foot in boiling

water, and if there is not a medicine-chest handy, then where are you? Ah, where indeed? Of course you can 'phone for the doctor, but 'phoning him and getting him aren't the same thing. But, however."

"I must of course have the chest done up. What would you propose to do to it?"

Crittle took it and examined it with care. "I'll tell you what I should do, sir. I should make good the fittings for the bottles on top and replace bottles. I should remove all the paint and stain a dark colour with a Jacobean finish. I should line the bottom of the drawers with a dark shade of Leatheroid, the light being unsuitable to the subject. And I think I can guarantee that when I'd finished it you'd find it a pleasant object to the eye and a very useful piece of furniture."

"And what would you charge?" asked

Mr. Dumphry.

"I can't say," said Mr. Crittle. "Dealing with these tender antiques you may come on trouble that you never suspected and that means outlay. All I can tell you is that I shan't charge you more than I can possibly help."

"Very good," said Mr. Dumphry. "Get

it finished as soon as possible.'

Mr. Crittle did not long delay. When the thing was completed it seemed to have just that quality that Mr. Dumphry (and many others) demanded in an antique—that is to say, it appeared to possess all the advantages of old age and none of the disadvantages.

Queenie was especially pleased with it.

"I could use that," she said. "Those eight dinky little bottles would hold all the things you really want, and you could put your manicure set in one of the drawers underneath and—well, if you're not going to use it yourself, I wouldn't a bit mind having it."

"Certainly," said Mr. Dumphry, "Crittle has done his work well. At present it is an excellent specimen of an early Victorian medicine-chest, and it is as a medicine-chest that I propose to use it. To-morrow I shall go to the chemist's and procure the requisite

drugs and other fittings."

"You know, Ernest," said Mrs. Dumphry, "you really are a very remarkable man. It was only the other day that you were describing a chest almost exactly like this. They cannot be easy to pick up. I do not think I have ever seen one before. But you seem to be able to find it as soon as you want it."

"And I hope it will be useful," said Ernest.
"I hope so," said Mrs. Dumphry. "Of course, for death or anything in that way it is more regular and satisfactory to be in the hands of the medical profession. But for a scratch on the finger or anything of that sort I have no doubt it will work admirably."

Mr. Dumphry paid his visit to the chemist next day and a very satisfactory visit it The chemist took the deepest interest in the subject and suggested many things which might never have occurred to Mr. Dumphry's unaided mind. The chemist was selling things the whole time, which was what he was there for and may to some extent have accounted for his enthusiasm. But Mr. Dumphry, who was merely purchasing, was not less enthusiastic. In addition to lint and roller bandages in three different sizes the bottom drawer contained stickingplaster, a clinical thermometer, and a small forceps for use in extracting thorns or splinters. In the drawer above it Mr. Dumphry kept drugs in tabloid form. had no less than thirty-two distinct and different phials; all very neat and attractive. When it came to the bottles, choice was more restricted. There were only eight bottles. Mr. Dumphry could have done with forty-But even with his restricted opportunities the chemist found him to be easily the best customer he had had for six weeks.

And then Fate frowned and a flat period The medicine-chest, beautifully equipped, was all ready to hand, but there was nothing whatever on which it could put in useful work. Mrs. Dumphry was well, Queenie and Barbara met with no accidents; even the domestic servants who, so far as Mr. Dumphry's recollection served, sprained their ankles or scalded their hands every other day of their lives, now seemed to have abandoned the practice altogether. Mr. Dumphry himself was well. He took two doses of a tonic to prevent the medicinechest from feeling discouraged, but he was well aware that he did not in the least require it.

In the meantime he went on reading medical articles in the Encyclopædia and amassing knowledge. He liked sometimes to imagine fancy pictures in which that knowledge showed up very well indeed. For instance, in one of these pictures the cook was to sprain her ankle badly. Mr. Dumphry instantly produced the roller bandage and applied it with perfect correctness. The regular doctor was summoned and witnessed what had been done.

"But," said the regular doctor, "you must already have a regular man in attendance. Bandaging like that could not have been done by a layman."

"Pardon me," replied Mr. Dumphry, but I have some knowledge of the subject. I put that bandage on myself."

And then this glorious scene vanished in smoke. And nobody was ill and there was nothing doing. And what did it avail Mr. Dumphry to know so much when he had no object on which he could expend it?

The intervention of Mr. Porpingham became therefore very welcome. Mr. Porpingham was a tobacconist, described on his bill-heads as Henry S. Porpingham. Mr. Dumphry on his way to the station passed Porpingham's shop and not infrequently purchased cigarettes there, occasionally if time served adding a few words on politics or the weather.

Porpingham was an obese man of middle age, who never fastened the top four buttons of his waistcoat and but seldom the others. From this we may deduce a certain want of reticence in Mr. Porpingham as to his private affairs, for those who habitually wear their waistcoats open unbosom themselves to the world.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Porpingham, "we have my uncle with us now. He's eighty-six and it'll be a deliverance when the time comes. And that can't be so very long."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Mr. Dumphry.

"Matter with him? Well, what isn't the matter with him? Blood pressure's all over the place, so the doctors tell me. Arteries something shocking. Can't do anything for himself that he can get anybody else to do for him. Hasn't fastened a bootlace these last three years. But it's the rheumatism that punishes him most."

"Rheumatism?" said Mr. Dumphry.

"Ah, I happen to know something about rheumatism. I might be able to help him."

"At eighty-six, sir? I doubt it. You can't cure anything at that age. All you can do is to pray for a happy release as soon as may be."

"I didn't say cure," said Mr. Dumphry.

"I may not be able to effect a cure, though as to that I could not speak positively without seeing the patient. What we can do is to provide a palliative—something which will lessen the pain and make things easier for him. I'll send a bottle to your house to-morrow morning, Mr. Porpingham."

"And very kind of you, I'm sure," said

colour. Mr. Dumphry fastened up the bottle of liniment with white paper and red Mr. Porpingham. So Mr. Dumphry went home with enthusealing-wax. He addressed it: "Mr. Porpingham senior, uncle to Mr. Henry S. Porsiasm and joy in his heart, and that evening he compounded the liniment for Mr. Porpingham. With Mr. Ernest Dumphry's compliments." pingham's elderly uncle. It would be un-He gave the bottle to the housetrue to say that he put into that liniment every drug which his medicine-chest could boast. parlourmaid with instructions that she was to take But his selection from it round to the them was wide and tobacconist's in the early morning. And

representative and it was supplemented by one or two things for which he sent out. All the volumes of the Encyclopædia were brought into requisition. Late in the evening came the finished product, somewhat treacly in consistency and dark brown in

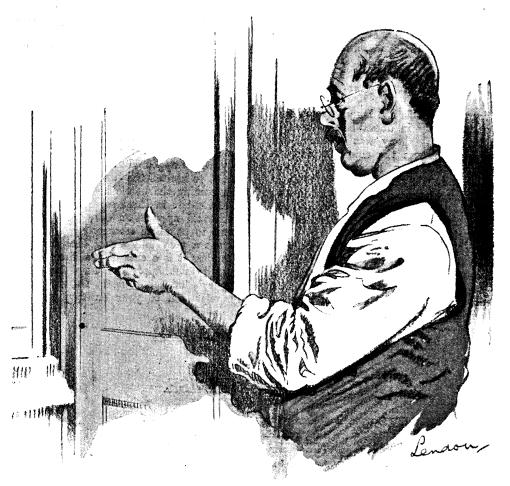
after that Mr. Dumphry slept soundly just as though no grisly fate were hanging over him.

When Mr. Dumphry reached Porpingham's shop he found the shutters up and the blinds drawn in the upstairs windows. As Mr. Dumphry stood and gazed upon the portent the proprietor stepped out from the next shop."

The next day was Saturday. Various friends, including Mr. Pierce Eveleigh, were coming in to dance that evening. And in the morning Mr. Dumphry took a short but intensive Tango lesson under the direction of his daughter Queenie. It was not till he had lunched—not, to be accurate, till he had snoozed for forty minutes after lunch—that the bright idea came to him that he might saunter round to Mr. Porpingham's, buy cigarettes, and inquire as to the effect of the liniment. The liniment was original,

shop he found the shutters up and the blinds drawn in the upstairs windows. As Mr. Dumphry stood and gazed upon the portent the proprietor stepped out from the next shop. He was a taxidermist and apparently never had anything to do, but seemed to thrive on it.

"Excuse me, sir," he said to Mr. Dumphry. "Trying to get into Porpingham's?



"'Excuse me, sir,' he said to Mr. Dumphry. 'Trying to get into Porpingham's? You can't do it. His uncle's dead... Tried some new medicine or other this morning, dropped back in his chair, and it was all over.'"

distinctly and strongly original. He might find that it had effected an immediate cure. In that case it might very well be that the secret of that liniment had a distinct commercial value. It could be put on the market. It might have an enormous success. Mr. Dumphry's imagination soared, and he pictured himself living and dying in circumstances of extreme affluence.

When Mr. Dumphry reached Porpingham's

You can't do it. His uncle's dead. It's been expected a long time. Tried some new medicine or other this morning, dropped back in his chair, and it was all over. Funeral's on Monday."

"Yes," said Mr. Dumphry, and turned

on his heel abruptly.

He now pictured himself in Court. The coroner said: "Are you a doctor, Mr. Dumphry?" And Mr. Dumphry was com-

pelled to reply that he was not, but was interested. The coroner asked why Mr. Dumphry had not marked his medicine as unsuitable for internal application. Mr. Dumphry replied that he was under the impression that he had done so, and was told that it was no use to be under impressions. The coroner referred to the dangerous vanity of this absurd quack, and the jury in their verdict censured him horribly. And then came the trial when he was charged with manslaughter, and Mrs. Dumphry died from the shock, and the lives of his daughters were ruined, and his own business was trodden down into the dust, and he was given seven years' penal servi-

The whole of this Mr. Dumphry pictured very realistically in about fifteen seconds, and his mental agony was extreme. He could even picture the elder Porpingham (whom, by the way, he had never seen) lying back in his chair with the bottle of Mr. Dumphry's special liniment still clasped in his left hand. It was terrible. It was perhaps the most horrible moment of Mr. Dumphry's life.

He sighed deeply and turned homeward. There was nothing else he could do. Only that morning he had been practising the Tango. The tragic irony of it! And here he was now already preparing to take his

trial for manslaughter.

And there, as a matter of fact, actually and on the pavement, and coming towards him, was his own parlourmaid, holding in her hand a medicine bottle encased in white paper and secured with red sealing-wax.

"I'm sorry, sir," said the parlourmaid.
"I fully meant to take it this morning, and how it slipped my memory I simply don't

know."

Mr. Dumphry came to life again.

"It's too late now, Agnes," he said. "The poor man for whom the medicine was intended has passed away. I do not think you need reproach yourself. He was very old and very ill, and it was probably too late for any human skill to save him. Just take the bottle back again and put it down in my study."

"Thank you, sir," said the girl brightly,

and moved off briskly with it.

Mr. Dumphry lit a cigarette and followed slowly. He appeared happy. He even hummed to himself the tune of that Tango. On examining the bottle he found that he had marked it in three separate places as for external application only, and on no account to be taken internally.

It was a very jolly dance that evening. But, unless it is a case of the direct emergency, do not apply for help from Mr. Dumphry's medicine-chest. He will probably refer you to your ordinary medical attendant.

THE GOLDEN VASE.

B^E thou a golden vase, my song, wherein to set
The flaming rose of my regret,
That Time may know
The dream I lost so long a while ago.

Be thou a golden vase, to keep, one little hour,
My lost dream in its perfect flower,
That Time may see
What perfume and delight yet dwell in me.

Be thou a golden vase, my song, and so outstay
Thy burden, swift to fade away,
That Time may keep
One truth of me, though dream and dreamer sleep.
WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



"The moment he came in I knew that he was Bruce. I had not thought of him for years, but directly this man appeared I recognised him."

THE PRAISES OF OBSCURITY

By SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK WILES

■HE public knows the story of the painter Gaugin and how he overthrew respectability, security and comfort, wife and children, all that is worth most to most men, in order to serve art and win fame. Most people probably feel that they ought to regard his conduct in this respect as admirable, since their artistic conscience tells them that it is admirable to love Art better than comfort and Fame better than obscurity. But some of us may have thought a little of the opposite adventure, and remembered the young French poet who, having put the literary world of his day at his feet, suddenly kicked it aside, married and took to trade, deliberately working for his own oblivion.

Perhaps his story is not so rare as you imagine. Anyhow, I can give it a parallel

in modern English life. I know—or rather knew—an Englishman of our world to-day who turned deliberately out of the path of certain fame to seek and finally to win that gentle bride, Obscurity, whose praises he sang as other men have sung the praises of her rowdy, blowsy sister, Fame.

Do you remember Clement Bruce? You do not; but twenty years ago you would have known him and all about him if you had had any claim to citizenship in the literary world. In those days we were all convinced that time would only add breadth and security to his reputation. The critics spoke of him as a Rising Star or a Coming Man, as they favoured romanticism or realism in their style; indeed, some had gone so far as to say he had already Risen or Arrived. His work would stand, they said,

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the test of time; no doubt he had not yet given us his best, but when he had, that best would live with the best of other ages.

Bruce experimented in different styles. He was not one of those writers who plod conscientiously up and down the same lane; he was over the hills and far away with every book he wrote. Mainly a novelist, he had passing encounters with poetry and the stage, and in his novels alone there was a bewildering variety of style and subject as he moved from the sordid to the romantic, from the realistic to the fantastic, from cities to the soil. This variety, the fact that it was impossible to associate him with any definite type of work and thus impress the public imagination—which requires to be hit several times heavily in the same place before it will notice a man—may have enabled him to carry out successfully that which I am convinced was not the mere accident of circumstance but his own deliberate plan. If he had really worn an impression on the mind of the general public, thirty years would not have been enough to rub it out. But he had failed to reach or rather to impress the man in the street, and the man in the studio and the man on the newspaper have notoriously short memories.

I knew Clement Bruce when he was at the height of his career—round about 1900. He had by then written some half-dozen novels, a book of verse and a couple of plays, which had been printed though never performed. His first books had appealed only to a small circle, but with every publication the circle had widened, and he had the distinction of having his early work continue selling quietly long after the time when by all the laws of fiction it ought to have been All the leading publishers were anxious to get hold of him, for everyone said that his would be a solid reputation, independent of literary fads. His novel Dust and Iron was published in July, 1901, and had sold twenty thousand copies within six weeks of publication. This was his first really popular success, and in addition the reviewers hailed it as a work of genius. They had given the same greeting to most of his earlier stuff, but there was more conviction and less of mere enthusiasm about their present tone.

Naturally, I thought Bruce must be liking all this. In my capacity of reporter, as well as by virtue of my convenience as an unattached and socially minded man, I met him a great deal here and there. He had become a lion, not only in the dens of literature, but also among the hunters. You met him in the houses of established men of letters, as well as in houses whose distinction was social rather than literary. At the same time he lectured to literary clubs, and even went on a provincial lecture tour, which won him immense favour among those Reading Societies attached to Nonconformist chapels, where lasting reputations are chiefly made. I thought him a lucky man, who had built his fame on the twin rock of literary merit and popular appreciation. Then one night he destroyed my illusions.

We had been together at some crush or other, I have forgotten where: all I remember is that it was a warm summer night and a few stars shone dimly above the roofs as we came out. We decided to walk home, or rather, I think, to take a walk together before we went home, as he lived appropriately in Chelsea and I lived in Bloomsbury, which was then far from being the fashionable quarter that poetry and We walked politics have made it since. along Park Lane on the Park side of the road, and somehow we began talking about himself and his reputation. We had always been good friends but never particularly intimate, and this was the first and only occasion he confided in me. I do not know if he ever unburdened himself in the same way to anyone else; sometimes I think not, for his attitude towards his own fame was apparently unknown to anyone but myself. He had intimate friends, but one does not always choose intimate friends for confidences.

That night he told me that he was absolutely sick of the whole business. He hated London literary life, whether as lived in Chelsea or in Mayfair. He said the outlook was artificial, and that it was impossible for an artist living in an artistic environment and seeing life only in relation to art to have any real knowledge of what life really was.

"And it's life I want—not art. Art's no use except to interpret life, and it's foolish to try to interpret a language one doesn't know."

"Why don't you go away into the country?" I suggested. "There's no need for you to stay in London now. Your reputation's made, you can take yourself off where you please. You're not like us poor sweats forgotten at the end of a month's holiday. You're known all over the country—not only in a small London set."

"That's just it," he said bitterly, "I'm known all over the country. Wherever I live I shall be Clement Bruce, the wellknown novelist. It will leak out in the remotest village that I can bury myself in. People who have never read my books will send for them to the nearest library. Even the tradespeople will become aware that I am different from themselves and their usual customers, that I belong to another genus of mankind—the literary gent. Simple people will expect me to 'put them into my books.' Ordinary human motives will never be credited to me. If I go anywhere at home or abroad the idea will be that I have gone to acquire copy or 'local colour.' Bah! If I were to marry, all literary London would be lost in conjecture as to how it would affect my art, and every enterprising newspaper editor would ask me for my views on married life, or on divorce, before I was back from my honeymoon. I tell you I'm sick of it! I want to live like an ordinary human being, and I can't."

"But surely you're not as famous as all that?" I remarked, taking the risks of candour.

"I am quite famous enough to be separate from my own kind. It requires only a small variation of type to create astonishment and curiosity in the rest of the species. critics tell me I am a genius. I believe that genius is a disease—a disease of the brain, only a chance variation of that disease which separates men from their fellows in prisons and asylums. Just vary the chemical ingredients to the smallest degree and instead of being Clement Bruce the famous novelist I am Bruce the murderer or 'poor Uncle Clement who had to be put away, you know-so very sad!' I'm separated, I tell you, I'm separated! I have to live with men like myself whose ideas and aims are conventionalised by art, or else I have to live with people who treat me as a strange and terrible phenomenon, as someone who can never be quite as they are. I tell you that sometimes I wish I could chuck it all up and be just a country grocer—a chap who never reads anything but the local paper and whose social centre is the pub and the Oddfellows' Society. He's a human being, and I'm not."

"I don't think you're speaking decently. You've got something that the country grocer hasn't, and you have—possibly, for I don't admit it—got to pay for it with something that he has. That's all."

"But I'd far rather have what he has than what I have."

"Then you are abnormal in other ways besides genius. What normal man would give up a reputation like yours for the life of the most humanly satisfied grocer in creation?—to say nothing of the money you earn. It isn't as if you were just the ordinary sort of novelist. The idea seems to be that you've got a reputation that will last—that after you're dead men and women will be reading your books—that your name will live long after all your contemporary grocers are byried and forgetten."

grocers are buried and forgotten."
"That," said Bruce solemnly, "is the most dreadful thought of all. If I thought that when I died, or soon after, I should be forgotten, then I believe I could bear it better. But I picture myself being read and remembered after I am gone. . . . don't say I have reached that stage yet, but it's a probability and a fear that haunts me. To think of myself getting a specially increased sale on the new advertisement that my death will give me, of being read in editions that get cheaper and cheaper as my copyrights expire, of becoming at last perhaps a Classic, bound in red leather and stuck on people's library shelves and never read, or bound in calf and given as prizes to poor little blighters who'd far rather have a set of tools! And then think of all the idiots spouting tosh on my centenary, and the dryasdust articles in the highbrow papers, and the correspondence as to whether Dust and Iron was really written in the spring of 1901 or the autumn of 1900, and the statue put up to me in a London park, 'realistic' in plus fours or 'expressionist' with my head like a horse's and my feet turning into hoofs—God! I can't bear it. Don't you see that it separates me from them more and more? For my memory to remain among men after I am gone only makes me more and more unlike them, who lie down in comfortable obscurity in village churchyards and after a generation or two are forgotten."

I had heard him talk in this style before, though not on this subject. He occasionally liked to indulge in a purple patch in conversation, perhaps as an antidote for having to deny himself that happy outlet in his novels.

"I tell you," he continued, warming to his work, "that as men have been willing to sacrifice everything for fame, I sometimes feel I would sacrifice everything for obscurity. Obscurity! That's the real goal

of the true artist! Obscurity, which is twilight and firelight, where fame is an incandescent glare! Obscurity, which is the life I can share with my fellows instead of life that I must live apart from them, which is fame! Obscurity, which is the death I can die with my fellows instead of the death I must die apart from them and after which I must live again, which is fame! I tell you it's time that some poet sang an ode to Obscurity, that some adventurer risked everything for Obscurity. I tell you—Oh well, never mind! It's no good telling you any more, for you won't understand."

I felt relieved that he did not intend to tell me any more as his voice had risen to heights incongruous with the empty London streets. Two passers-by turned to stare at us, even a taxi-driver looked round. My own love of obscurity was enough to make me change the conversation.

ΤT

I DID not see him again after that date, or rather in the light of subsequent events it would be safer to say that I don't know if I ever saw him again. The mood evidently remained with him for a day or two, for the next evening I had a letter from him in the same style as his speech. It began by apologising for having made an ass of himself last night and then proceeded to repeat everything that, as an ass, he had There were patches in that letter of an even deeper purple than any in our recent conversation; he wrote two whole pages in praise of obscurity—evidently he was pleased with the idea. For some reason or other I kept the letter. I think I meant to answer it and then didn't. Anyhow, I found it put away with some others in a drawer years later and then decided to keep it, for it was the only link with him I had.

I left London rather unexpectedly a couple of days after my talk with Bruce. Various events took place which are my own story. It is enough to say that I did not return to town, but left England altogether in another six weeks, and was in New Zealand and then in New South Wales until the spring of 1914, when I returned to London. I was anxious to join up old links, correspondence having as usual failed. Therefore I attempted to ring up quite a number of people, including Bruce. Twelve years make a big gap in one's social life—I found that most of my old acquaintances had left town or changed their addresses.

Bruce's name was not in the telephone book, so I tried his publishers, who were also friends of mine. But they could tell me nothing about him; they did not know his address. He had, they understood, left England. He had not published anything with them or anybody for more than ten years, and such cheques as still fell due for his old work were paid direct into his bank. I was surprised. Certainly I had heard little or nothing of him while I was away, but I had not been among people or places where modern fiction is of much account. It seemed odd for him to have disappeared like this. I made some fruitless efforts to trace him. I wrote to him care of his bank, but received no reply—I made one or two inquiries among common acquaintances, but no one seemed to have heard anything of him for periods varying from nine to eleven years. Apparently in 1902 he had gone off to Italy, and thence to Austria and Servia; but there was evidence that he had returned and rumours that he had settled in Scotland, also others that he had been seen in Cornwall. But there seemed to be no recent information and certainly there was but little interest. Nine years of total disappearance is quite enough to rub a man's name out of the conversation of literary London. "Oh, he's giving himself a rest "-" He was afraid of writing himself out" had been given and received as ample explanation at the start; then even such eddies had ceased.

I could not help thinking that he had acted deliberately. He had really meant what he said to me that night in Park Lane. I had not forgotten it; it had impressed me even more than I thought at the time. own absence from my usual haunts and the ease with which apparently I had fallen from all acquaintance there made me realise that what had merely happened to me Bruce might have achieved of deliberate purpose. Was he mad? Is the slaughtering of a man's own reputation—the violation of his will-to-live in the world of ideas—as sure a sign of a disordered brain as the slaughtering of his own body, of his will-tolive in the world of sensation? Was Bruce the felon of his own fame? And if so, how did he fare in the limbo whither he had sent himself? Having won Obscurity, did he find her the bride he had imagined? longed to know, and wrote to him again at his bankers' address. But again he did not answer, and this time I was angry. I told myself that I wouldn't worry about him any

more. He wanted me to forget him—well, forget him I would. And I did.

No doubt the outbreak of war in August helped me. I succeeded in getting out to France with the Durhams, and apart from that the world in which I had known Bruce ceased to exist. The Arts no longer counted except in the primitive emotional forms which they took in music and poetry. nearly five years it was as if the earth's axis shook, and one saw the Bronze Age coming back—and the Stone Age. Then vibration ceased and everything flew back to where it had been before; poetry died, and fiction and the drama rose up again. But they rose with a new set of names. The last of Bruce's cheap editions had vanished from the bookstalls-during the scarcity of labour and paper his publishers had not thought it worth while to reprint him, and now he really was dead—felon of himself.

I thought that he must be dead in fact as well as in name. I could not imagine him still existing apart from the world he had lived in and the art he had served. For a time—yes—but not for so long. Perhaps he had been killed in the War. He was over age, it is true—ten years older than I—but still he might have done it. He might have joined up under his assumed name—for he must have chosen a name for his oblivion—and now be lying at the foot of one of those numberless crosses in Flanders, obscure in the common glory.

III.

In the August of 1922 I went on a walking tour through Kent. I was hard up, and it seemed the best sort of holiday that could be had for my money. After I had begun it I wished I hadn't, for the weather was rainy, and terribly cold for the time of year. Still I stuck to it, and one wretched and drizzling day I tramped from Canterbury to Maidstone, a distance, I suppose, of about twenty miles. It was all cross-country, and I had been fool enough not to bring a map. I had trusted to signposts to help me, not reckoning with the economy of Rural District Councils. I wandered about in small lanes, with a continual wet mist driving between the hedges. There seemed to be no villages, only occasional farmhouses and groups of cottages where one could perhaps find a small shop, and perhaps

Towards dusk I stopped at one of these, to replenish my store of matches and to ask the way, as I was beginning to recognise the symptoms of being lost. It was one of those shops where you can buy everything, from a pair of boots to a pound of biscuits. It looked cosy enough as I stepped in, out of the dusk and wet, and there was the flicker of firelight in the room beyond. No one was behind the counter, but as the little bell over the door buzzed loudly on my entrance, a woman came in from the back room and asked me what I wanted.

"A box of matches, please. And can you tell me the best way to Maidstone?" She picked the matches off the shelf, but

seemed puzzled by the question.

"I dunno. Reckon it's some way yet. But I'll ask him."

She called into the back room—"Father!"

A man came in. He was of middle height, inclined to be bony; his hair was thin on the top and he wore a big walrus moustache. But the moment he came in I knew that he was Bruce.

I had not thought of him for years, but directly this man appeared I recognised him. It was not the sight of any special feature, the putting together of any memories. It was just a complete emotional recognition, a complete awareness apart from detail. Then my general impression became confirmed by a dozen signs. There were his hands, chiefly—for you cannot disguise hands, and in spite of a certain exterior coarseness the long nervous fingers remained, the fingers of the artist and thinker who was Clement Bruce.

"Father, this gentleman wants to know the best way to Maidstone."

He fixed his light grey eyes upon me, and I prepared myself for his start. But it never came. Then suddenly I doubted, and the vividness of my first impression passed. His utter impassivity, his obvious lack of recognition in that first moment, made me doubt. If he was Bruce he must recognise me, since I had changed but little, and if he recognised me surely he must be betrayed into some token of it, utterly unprepared as he was. But he never budged.

"If you go on to the cross-roads, you'll see Pope's Hall on the signpost," he said impassively, "go on from there to Boughton Malherbe, and three miles farther on you're on the highroad from Ashford to Maid-

stone."

I stared at him again, intently, to break his guard. The eyes were Bruce's—bluish-

grey and curiously retracted; there was the irregular and bushy eyebrow that I remembered and the same long sensitive nose. The moustache of course was new, but that was obvious and easy to account for. I

resolved to make him talk as much as possible.

"Perhaps I could get a bus on the high-road?

"There's one leaves Ashford for Maidstone every two hours or so. Lenham—where you strike the road—is about

midwav."

I noticed that he did not speak with the nasal drawl of the county; on the other hand I could not definitely recognise the voice as Bruce's, no doubt because I have not the same memory for voices as I have for faces and hands. He did not seem inclined to talk much, and I was rather at a loss how to prolong the situation. Then suddenly a thought struck me.

"Could you let me have a cup of tea?" I asked. "I've come from Canterbury and it seems I've a long way yet

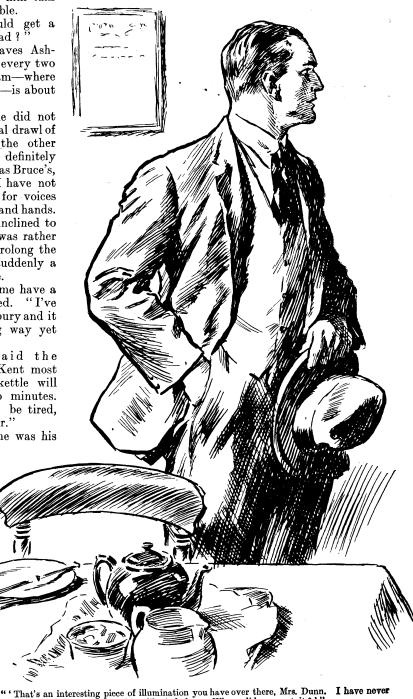
to go."
"Surelye," said the woman, who was Kent most certainly, "the kettle will be boiling in two minutes. Reckon you must be tired, having come so far."

I wondered if she was his

Apparwife. ently so, since they addressed each other as "Mother" and "Father." She seemed a nice comfortable thing, somewhere in her middle forties. should say small farmer's shopkeeper's daughter. She asked me to come into the back room,

while "Father" banished to was the kitchen.

I am reserved by nature, and the situation made speech doubly difficult, but I put on an air of faux bonhomme which, if he really



seen anything like it before. Where did you get it?'

was Bruce, must have given me away at once, and went and stood in the kitchen doorway while she boiled the kettle and he

sat by the fire with a newspaper. I tried to work up the conversation the weather, the remoteness of the district; asked if they saw many people, if they had been long in the hamlet, if they found it lonely,

"Ever been in London?" I asked him indifferently.

"Oh yes, I was born there. Spent a lot



"She hesitated for a moment. She did not seem to remember. Then suddenly I saw Bruce behind her in the doorway, looking over her shoulder. He was staring at me intently—and I seemed to see in his eyes a look of pleading—an entreaty that I would probe no further.'

more rather impertinent questions. replies were quite naturally given. They found it lonely in winter, but now the buses were running between Ashford and Maidstone things weren't so bad and they got about more. There were scarcely a dozen cottages in the hamlet, but Boughton Malherbe was only two miles away—that was where the children went to school. They had four children, the eldest of whom was thirteen; their name was Dunn, and he had come, he said, from the shires, though she had been born in Canterbury and had lived there till her marriage.

of my time there, too."

"In a shop? Did you get your experience there?"

"No, I didn't start shopkeeping till I came to these parts. I was clerk in a warehouse."

"Fight in the War?"

"No, I was over age and not very strong, so they wouldn't have me. I did a bit of Special Constable work for a time."

I was tried by the offensiveness of my own curiosity and resolved to bring the matter to an end. I asked him straight out: "Did you ever know a man called Clement Bruce?"

If he wasn't Bruce it would merely appear to him an idiotic question, such as a foolish and ill-mannered person like myself would be likely to ask. If he was Bruce surely he would be betrayed into some sign. But again he never budged.

"Clement Bruce?" he said. "I don't think so. I've met hundreds of people in my time but no one of that name, that I can remember. Where did he live?"

"In London," I said. "He was a writer. He wrote novels. I used to know him, and it struck me that you were rather like him."

He shook his head. "I've never had anything to do with writers, they're not the kind of people I'd be likely to get on with. Trade's been my line all through."

I gave it up. I was now convinced that I had made a mistake—that this was not Bruce. If he was Bruce he must have carried the art of lying to a finer pitch than he had ever carried the art of fiction. Besides, he would have recognised me, unless indeed he had completely lost his memory; my unexpected appearance in his refuge would have taken him totally by surprise, and I could not imagine that he would have betrayed absolutely no sign or have seemed so totally unmoved by my presence or my questions.

My tea was ready and I went back into the little sitting-room and they shut the door. It was a perfectly ordinary room, such as one would expect to find at the back of a small village shop. The walls were papered with a heavily patterned paper, which did not prevent them being also covered with pictures and photographs and brackets. There were lace antimacassars on the chairs and a heavy green cloth on the centre table where also lay one or two books of the Sunday School prize sort. small bamboo table stood in the window with an aspidistra upon it, filling the space between the Nottingham lace curtains; a green crinkly paper shade adorned the lamp that hung from the ceiling. It was all typical of modern cottage bad taste.

When I had drunk my tea, I got up and had a look round. You might say that the whole family history for the last fifteen years was on the wall in photographs—but I noticed significantly that there was nothing earlier than the Wedding Group in which he stood very stiff in his blacks and buttonhole, with oiled forelock, drooping moustache and upright collar, beside his

bride in her lace veil and orange blossom, with two smirking bridesmaids on either side of them. Then there was a photograph of him and his wife evidently taken on some pier during their honeymoon; then he stood behind her as she held her first baby; then she had another child in her arms with the first youngster at her side, and gradually the group enlarged to four children. I inspected other photographs. There was one of him taken with the rest of the Wesleyan choir on their Annual Outing, another of him with a prize marrow that he had exhibited in the local Flower Show, there was his certificate of membership of the Ancient Order of Druids. . . . Bruce must have been an even greater genius than I thought if he had done the thing so completely—had so entirely lifted himself, not merely out of his profession but out of his class, and taken such apparently firm root in new soil. The man as I had known him was incapable of it. He could not have lived this life for a year. This could not

Then suddenly I stood still and almost gasped. I had come to what I thought was another framed certificate, but on closer inspection it proved to be an illuminated parchment, hanging in a plain dark frame between two reproductions of family orgies. It was evidently the work of some amateur in illumination, and impressively decorated with scrolling and gold work. It was headed

"THE PRAISES OF OBSCURITY."

I read it with a shudder in my spine.

"Obscurity is the true refuge of the true artist. Obscurity is twilight and firelight, while Fame is an incandescent glare. Obscurity is the life I can share with my fellows, while Fame is the life I must live apart from them. Obscurity is the death I die with my fellows, while Fame is the death I die apart from them and after which I must live again—apart. Oh ye lovers of Fame! turn and seek Obscurity, for she is gentle where Fame is hard, and kind where he is cruel! She will give you love and goodwill where Fame will give you hate and envy. And you will sleep sweetly in her arms at the last."

I cannot pretend that I had remembered word for word Bruce's outburst of so long ago, but the gist of it had stuck in my memory owing to the fact that it was the last conversation we had had together. Also it had been further impressed upon me by the letter, which was, as I have said, an embellishment of the speech, just as the illumination appeared to be an embellishment of the letter. I was now quite The man was Bruce. No other decided. would have been likely to write the Praises of Obscurity, and this was Bruce's own language. Here, in this hidden Kentish hamlet, the name of which I did not yet know, he had found what in his heart he had desired and sought more than Fame—the life of an obscure country shopkeeper—the grocer he had once envied. . . .

I rang the bell as if to pay for my tea. The woman who called herself Mrs. Dunn came in. I wondered how much she knew. Had she helped him accomplish his adventure, or was her ignorance a part of it? I

remarked as casually as I could:

"That's an interesting piece of illumination you have over there, Mrs. Dunn. I have never seen anything like it before.

Where did you get it?"

She hesitated for a moment. She did not seem to remember. Then suddenly I saw Bruce behind her in the doorway, looking over her shoulder. He was staring at me intently—and I seemed to see in his eyes a look of pleading—an entreaty that I would probe no further—that I would have mercy, and let him be. I felt myself falter in my intention, and the next minute he spoke.

"We got it at a sale. Don't you remember, Mother? Over at Souledge."

"Yes, maybe it was there. We bought a lot of pictures."

"Do you approve of the sentiments?" I could not refrain from asking her.

She seemed bewildered.

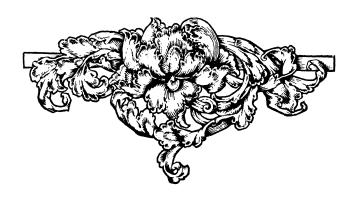
"Oh . . . I reckon we do. Not that I'm sure of having read it myself, the writing's too difficult!"

There was nothing more to be said. I

paid for my tea and went.

By the time I had got to Maidstone I had already begun to doubt that look in Bruce's eyes—the look that had silenced me. After all, it is foolish to judge by such appearances. He had probably only been staring out of ordinary curiosity, and I had read his curiosity into an appeal, being already predisposed by my own state of mind.

I have never been able to settle the matter. To this day I cannot feel sure that the man in the village shop was Bruce; on the other hand, I cannot feel sure that he was not Bruce. Of course I could have made further investigations, but I didn't care to. If he wasn't Bruce, then I was merely being impertinent. If he was . . . in that case I felt I was being something worse than impertinent. So I have left him there, in the hamlet of which I do not even know the name. Whether he is or is not Bruce, he is the man Bruce would have liked to be. Whether Bruce could have lived like that for fifteen years is another matter. Apart from questions of fame and money, I find it difficult to believe that he could have existed so long outside the world where his soul lived—the world of thought and art and achievement. And yet . . . after all, what in the end can life give us more than herself? The form may vary, but the essence is the same. Are the rewards of the artist and the grocer so very different? I don't know.



A TOUCH OF PAINT

B_v PHILIP BURTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

F you know Penhallow well, if you are versed in its customs and observances, you will sometimes take an evening walk along the church path on a Saturday; and you will notice, just a little after six o'clock, that you are passing Port Treloa farm. Passing it? That were friendly. Across the yard, against the low grey wall that joins the dairy to his house, young Harry Plynt is standing. He looks up as he hears your footfalls cease outside the gate, and beckons largely. You pass inside, and skirt the midden; give him a greeting, proffer your pouch, commiserate upon the weather. . . .

When two or three more neighbours have displayed irresolution at the gate and have been bidden to the group about the dairy wall, Plynt sighs contentedly and stretches; takes from the wall beside him the tumbler no one else had seemed to notice, and fishes from his trousers pocket a great rusty iron key. Slowly, Plynt leading, a procession

moves across the yard. . . .

Inside the cellar, whose one tiny window the spiders of a hundred years have darkened, you feel your way along the row of hogsheads, and with uncertain fumblings find a seat. Presently, when your eyes have grown accustomed to the change, you will be able to descry the faces of the company, even to catch the golden glint of cider in the glass. Presently, too, there will be yarns spun in the cool half-darkness.

A voice has said that Johnny Hoad is brightening up his cottage with a tin of paint

that someone gave him.
"Paint, eh?" says Harry Plynt. "Paint was a terrible dangerous word in these parts, back-along. 'Twas when great-grandfather was farming Port Treloa. Maybe you know the story?"

Great-grandfather—Tom Plynt was his name, and so I'll call him, for the other's terribly unhandy—came here when he was twenty, nigh a hundred years ago. His father had died a little time before, and his

mother had followed him into the grave within a week. 'Twas the small-pox took them. Tom sold the old farm near Liskeard, and after he'd looked around for a time, he settled at Port Treloa, and he brought his only sister, Rachel, to work the house for him. Rachel was just a year younger than Tom, and so pretty a maid as you'd want to see; a cheerful, merry young woman, 'tis said, and a wonderful hand at the dairy. 'Twas not in nature Tom would be able to keep such a treasure for long.

Jack Tregalla, who was farming Hendigarth then, was the man she chose; and it might be thought, seeing what Tom had lost, that the brothers-in-law would fail to agree. The more so, maybe, through Port Treloa and Hendigarth being so close together. But as it proved, the two men took to each other uncommonly well; and it used to be said, round here, that if you wanted to find Tom Plynt of an evening, you'd best have a look

to Hendigarth first.

There was only one fly in the ointment, you may say, and that was the fact of Jack Tregalla's being so terribly given to playing jokes. He had been so from a child; and some of the things he did at school you wouldn't believe. And for all he was really fond of his brother-in-law, he could never forego the chance of having a joke with him. Tom was an easy-going man, and he suffered Tregalla's fun in a spirit of tolerance; but one day something happened he couldn't swallow.

Polvean had a horse-fair then, and a great occasion it was, by all accounts. Nearly all the farmers used to drive in from round about, and dealers would come from as far away as Exeter. Tom Plynt dressed up in his best when the fair day came, and after he'd had his breakfast he set off walking to Hendigarth.

"Don't 'ee go sitting up waiting for me," he said to Mrs. Pengelly, who had been keeping house for him since Rachel went, "for I'm driving into Polvean with Jack in his trap; and coming home late, so likely

as not, on something I'll buy at the fair." He spent the day at the fair with Jack,. but try as he might he couldn't find anything that he liked at the price he wanted to pay. Once or twice, indeed, he started to bid for what had struck his eye as being a likely one; but there's more in buying a horse than looks and price, and on each occasion Jack, who was moving abroad in the crowd and using his ears, came back to whisper the horse was a kicker or given to bolting or otherwise not to be bought. And so, when it came to be eight o'clock or so, they gave it up in despair and sat down to supper into the Wheatsheaf.

There was a brave foregathering of Penhallow men in there, and after supper they crowded into the little room at the back, and discussed the buying and selling over a drink Most of those who had come to buy were tolerably well conceited with their luck, bragging a bit of the bargains they'd made, as men will do; but Tom held out there wasn't a horse in Polvean that day worth what it fetched, and declared, in a joking way, he was full of pity for such as had been persuaded to part with their money.

Every now and again it had crossed his mind that a little gipsy-looking fellow, who was sat in a corner drinking gin-and-water all by himself, was staring at him very queerly out of his beady eyes; and presently, when Tom was boasting nobody could persuade him into buying a horse he wasn't sure of, this chap came out of his corner and touched his arm.

"I reckon, master," he said, "that I could persuade you to buy a mare I've got outside."

Everybody stopped talking and turned to have a look at him. As for Tom, although he was a sober man by habit, and stuck to cider despite the fashion for drinking smuggled brandy, he'd had enough, one way and another, to make him relish an argument.

"Reckon 'ee couldn't, then," he said, looking him up and down. "Will 'ee bet on it, now?"

The gipsy bet him a guinea so cool as you please; and the others gathered around, encouraging first the one and then the other,

and laughing at both.

'Tis said they argued half an hour by the Wheatsheaf clock; and in eloquence and in knowledge of horseflesh nobody could have judged between them. First the gipsy would hold forth on some wonderful virtue of the mare's, then Tom would properly pick his speech to pieces; and the others were cheering them on to greater efforts, and seeing they didn't get dry in the throat for lack of cider. The first round went to the gipsy, you may say, for he got Tom Plynt to come outside and look at the mare. 'Twas dark out there in the yard, and the air was cool and sweet after the crowded room in the Wheatsheaf, and maybe a little bewildering to the senses.

Somebody fetched a lantern, and the company, to a man, came out to see the end of it. They stood around the mare in a ring, while Tom and Jack examined her points. Tom liked her looks to once. "'Tis a good mare," he whispered to Jack, "though nothing young. Do 'ee think she'm stolen, now?"

Jack shook his head. "So honestly comeby," he whispered back, "as your own. I tell 'ee, I know the man. He'm straight enough, but a terrible fool at a bargain."

Tom put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a guinea. "Take it," he said to the gipsy, "for I think the bet is won"; and with that they started to bargain over the price.

All the way home Tom chuckled to think of his luck; for he'd beaten the gipsy down to a price that was not much more than half what he'd thought to pay. He had borrowed saddle and bridle at the Wheatsheaf, and the mare was going steady enough, seeming to understand him uncommonly well. Every so often Jack would call out to know how the mare was shaping, and "Bravely, bravely," he'd answer.

When he was back to the farm he stabled the mare, thinking he might have a job to catch her next day, if he turned her loose with the others. He went up to bed without a care in the world.

"So you didn't buy at the fair, then, master," said Mrs. Pengelly, when Tom came down next morning.

"Didn't I so?" said Tom, "and what is it makes 'ee think I didn't?"

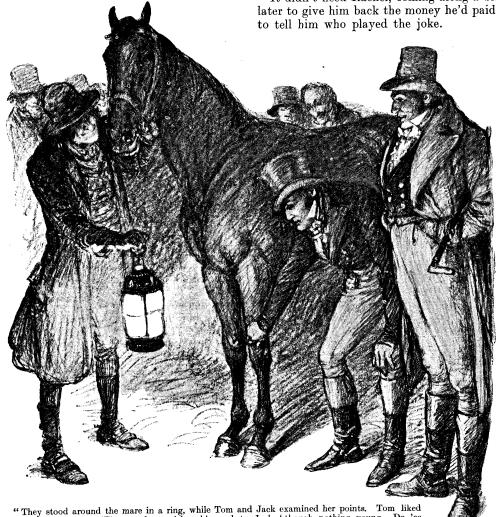
Mrs. Pengelly gazed at him quite aston-"Why, master," she said, "didn't 'ee send me a message to that very same effect? 'Twasn't more than half an hour after 'ee'd gone that Jerry, Mr. Tregalla's man, came in to here for Bessie. 'Why's that for ?' I says. 'Tis Mr. Plynt's orders. then,' says he, 'for he've changed his mind about buying a horse to the fair; master,' he says—meaning Mr. Tregalla—' 'm coming home earlier than Mr. Plynt has a mind to. So I'm to ride Bessie into Polvean for he to ride home, and master 'm taking back I----' "

She would have run on for a brave time vet, no doubt, but Tom's behaviour brought her up with a jerk. He first of all gave her a terrible look that pretty-nigh frightened her out of her wits; then he jumped up and ran from the room as if he was mad.

Old Peter Toms, one of his workmen, saw

described was more of the nature of fire and brimstone than anything else; and he carried it into the stable. When Tom and he had come to the end of that bottle the gipsy's horse had vanished; and Bessie, the mare that Tom's father had reared from a filly, was very much more herself.

It didn't need Rachel, coming along a bit later to give him back the money he'd paid, to tell him who played the joke.



"They stood around the mare in a ring, while Tom and Jack examined her points. Tom liked her looks to once. 'Tis a good mare,' he whispered to Jack, 'though nothing young. Do 'ee think she'm stolen, now?'"

him dash across the yard into the stable, and wondered what was afoot; and just as he'd made up his mind he'd best go into the stable and see, there came from within the most terrible flow of language he ever heard in his life. He stood there amazed, for a time, with his mouth hanging open; but at length he made out that his master was asking for turpentine. He fetched a bottle quick enough, though the stuff he'd heard

The cruellest joke would be easy to bear if people would let it alone. They never do, however, and you may be sure they didn't then. All the parish was laughing at Tom, the man who'd spent an hour in buying his own old mare; and no one could meet him without remarking, "It's wonderful what a touch of paint'll do."

After a time, paint got to be a dangerous thing to mention in Port Treloa.

Tom wasn't the one to break with a friend for a thing like that. He owned to Jack, when his anger had had an hour or two to for a fortnight into Polperro; and the old amusements, the drolls and geese-dancing and the rest, had died out pretty well every-



'Twas when

it came October month that Tom had time and leisure to keep his word. He'd laid his plans and prepared his ground, and nothing was wanting now but a day's fine weather at the

appointed time.

One morning he rose up early, and went to the window, terribly dreading it might be a rainy day. He put out his head and looked around; and he heaved a sigh of relief. For the wind was coming softly out of the east, and the sea was misty and everything pointed to warm and sunny weather. It couldn't have promised a finer day for St. Martin's Fair or the doings he had in mind.

There wasn't a Cinema down to Looe in those days, or travelling actors setting up pennies all the year round to take to Tarrington at Martinmas. When Tom set off that afternoon in his trap with Jack beside him, the roads were full of all sorts and conditions of carts and wagons, each with as many aboard as the horse could draw.

You couldn't expect to pass in the narrow lanes, and all the people were hailing those in front and behind, joking each other about the fair as merry as so many children. Whether Jack thought of the day he'd taken Tom in his trap to another fair, and saw how things were reversed in a terribly ominous sort of way, is not to be said. He was as merry as anyone on the road that day, teasing Tom about Sally Penreath, saying he wondered he cared to go fairing with Sally away with her aunts to Plymouth. Everyone knew that Tom had been anxious to court Sally Penreath for more than a year;

but since she was a saucy enough little hussy, with a ready tongue and a nimble wit, and he was unaccountably shy with the maids,

he never found courage to speak.

"Terribly lonely and cast down, you'm looking," said Jack; and Tom, who was bubbling over with the brave joke he'd planned, and trying every way he knew to keep from looking too joyful and vainglorious, took refuge in teasing Jack about Rachel.

"'Tis a wonder, then," he'd say, "you care to go to the fair, with your wife to home with a twisted ankle. Poor Rachel—'tis well for her I'm here to look after 'ee."

They got to Tarrington in course of time, and spent the day at the fair, seeing the Tattooed Lady, and the Wild Man of the Woods, and the Veritable Monster of the Deep, and all the rest, and very successfully forgetting they were grown men and much above such foolishness. And at the end, when they'd seen and sampled everything, and spent a lot more money than they ever meant to, they went to watch the dancing on the green.

There were torches lighted round the green in those days, and some of them, when it got late, would be burnt out before the man who was looking after them could get round with new ones; so that some of the dancers would be there for all the world to see, and others footing it in dismal darkness. Not that dismal's the proper word, you may say. It wasn't against the rules of the dancing then for a kiss or two to be given and taken when the chance arose, and nobody much the worse, maybe.

Tom and Jack were standing on the edge of the green in the light of a torch, each of them busy telling the other he ought to get a maid and join in the fun, and they saw that someone was standing under the next torch along on the left. That one was out, and they couldn't see the girl as plainly as she saw them; but she seemed to be in much the same sort of case as they—envying everyone else for having a partner.

After a time she turned and looked towards them; and then she smiled, and beckoned so plainly you couldn't mistake it. Under her bonnet, in light like that, you couldn't see much of her face; but what you could see—the flash of her teeth and the darkness of her skin—would have made you guess that she was a gipsy girl, and likely a more than commonly pretty one, too. The two men looked at each other.

"'Tis you she means," said Tom; and Jack, laughing to think of anyone being so shy as that, left him and danced off into the crowd with the girl.

Tom no sooner saw him go than he got to work. It took him but little time to gather his friends, for he'd only to keep a look-out as he moved abroad; and soon he had raised a dozen men from Penhallow and round about, and assembled them down to the edge of the green.

More than one of those he had stopped had contrived to turn his greeting into a talk about paint and its wonderful properties, but Tom forgave them all for the sake of what was coming. And when he had told them of what was afoot—of how he'd persuaded Rachel to paint her face like a gipsy and catch her husband out in a way he wouldn't forget—they agreed that Jack had found his master at last.

It was when poor Jack had danced his partner on to a darkish part of the green, and looked—to those who made a point of watching him—to be making the most of opportunity, that Tom and his band ran out on them with a shout. The men held hands in a circle so that the couple had never a chance of escape, and Tom ducked under their arms and faced his brother-in-law. Jack just stood there looking uncommonly foolish, and his partner hung her head.

"You serpent!" said Tom, very stern, and acting his part to the life, "you great black-hearted toad! You wicked deceiver of innocent, trusting women! You'm a brave sort of man to have for a brother-in-law! Oh, my dear life, to think I gave 'ee my sister! Take off your bonnet, my dear," he said to the girl, "and let's see what poor maid this adder's deceived with his courant-

ings and gallantings."

All the time she was fumbling with the strings of her bonnet, Tom was rehearsing the little speech he'd composed concerning paint—and the marvellous difference it can make; and he feared every moment that he'd be burst asunder unless he gave rein to his mirth to once. But when the bonnet was off, and the girl stepped forward to catch the light on her face, she started to laugh, and so did Jack; and the others laughed till some of them rolled on the ground and gasped for breath. For it wasn't Rachel at all, but Sally Penreath; and Tom, who stood there working his mouth and his eyes like a dying fish, wished that the earth would open and swallow him up.

Even after it all came out, and he knew

how Rachel—a better wife than a sister—had played him false and given the plot away to Jack and Sally, he never bore malice on any one of the three. Least of all on Sally Penreath. Whether the sight of her swinging her bonnet and laughing up in his face was pretty enough to give him courage, or whether he snatched at a chance of getting away from the rest, the fact remains that his very first words, when he found himself able to speak at all, were to ask her to dance with him. And the two of them found themselves getting along so bravely together that

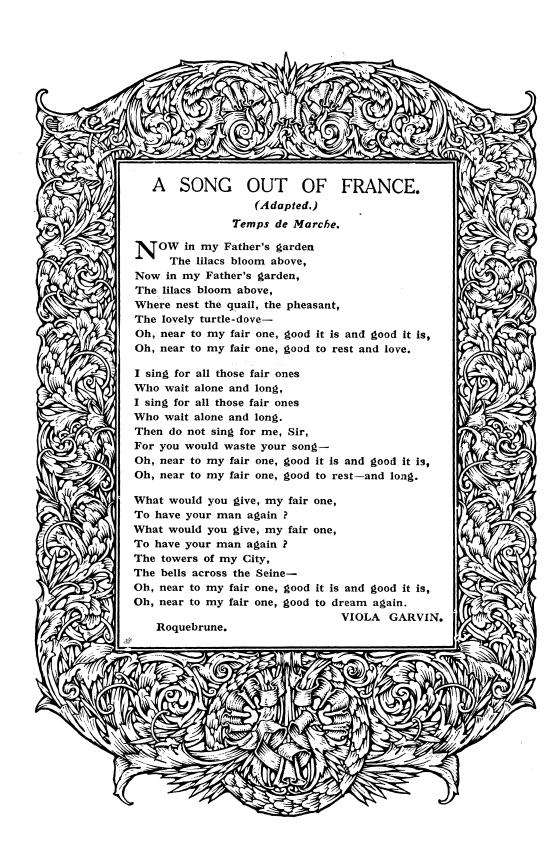
'tis said they were promised before they said good night.

When Tom was an oldish man, and used to be telling the story to my father, he'd say, "'Tis an easier thing to wed a maid than to hear the end of a joke." When he and Sally were leaving church, with all Penhallow there to see the wedding, he heard two gossips chattering in the porch.

"So he'm caught to last," says one. "Yas," says the other, nodding her head very bitter, being unmarried herself, "yas, 'tis wonderful what a touch of paint'll do."



"When the bonnet was off, and the girl stepped forward to catch the light on her face, she started to laugh, and so did Jack. . . . For it wasn't Rachel at all, but Sally Penreath; and Tom, who stood there working his mouth and his eyes like a dying fish, wished that the earth would open and swallow him up."





WINGS OF THE WIND

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

EOFFREY MALLORY was dressing in an irascible mood. A night of blustering north wind had banished sleep. He had needed rest; asleep he found it easier to forget Nora Vallance and the fact that he was determined not to marry her. Lying awake was inimical to his peace of mind. Sleepless hours had a trick of showing him Nora in her most exquisite moods. She was painted on the shadows of night as exquisitely as a Rossetti woman on canvas.

Geoffrey dressed hurriedly, his eye on the clock. He always moved strictly to time limit. The critical might have dubbed him over precise. Old Donald Mallory, Geoffrey's father, found endless data for study in his son. This morning he came down ten minutes late for breakfast to find Geoffrey half-way through his meal.

Geoffrey half-way through his meal.

"Late, am I?" Mallory grunted.

"Wise of me. Hurry's bad for old age.
The wind kept me awake half the night.
What a bluster! Thought the roof would

come in. Well, you've got your plans all cut and dried for to-day?"

Geoffrey nodded, his eye on the clock. In ten minutes he must be off. "Yes, I'm going first to old Pondon and his wife to give them notice to quit. I suppose under the circumstances a talk will be better than writing."

"What's wrong with them?"

"Sentiment. They've fallen in love with stone walls. I'm explaining to them that they could be happy elsewhere."

"They owe you rent?" Mallory asked.

"Three quarters—and no prospect of paying. They've a son who offers to give them a home, and nothing save sentimentality holds them back. Anyhow, they go from my house."

Mallory stared at Geoffrey over the rim of his coffee cup. This son of his was a queer sort. Stick a key somewhere in the machine, wind it, set it going—that was Geoffrey.

"Well, you must manage your own business," Mallory said aloud. "The property's your own to do as you like with. But the Pondons are old, eh? A bit pathetic?"

"My plans are made," Geoffrey affirmed. He might as well have added, "My plans are as immutable as sun or stars."

He was not immune from the wind's fury though. Going along the road presently he resented the gale as an affront to his dignity. It hustled; it had the familiarity of an over-assertive acquaintance. Bending against the blast Geoffrey's resentment was sharpened to a fine point of irritation when he came to the Pondons' gate. He glanced critically at the house. It was a snug little spot. These people once out of the way he could let it for a good rent. Sentiment was a poor horse to drive when finance was to the fore. He would be firm; no shilly-shally. . . .

The wind, impudent jade, tweaked at his hat. It became suddenly a freakish toy, dodging him amongst the flower-beds. Uncaptured and derisive it bowled presently on to the roadway, moving gaily to the whimsical bidding of the wind. Geoffrey gave chase—the hat was a velour, and newish. He bent his bared head to the gale and ran doggedly. Some small boys in the roadway gave convincing signs of mirth, and Geoffrey's fingers tingled for reprisal. At the close of an arduous hunt he recaptured the hat and returned to the Pondons' gate flushed and breathless. He met Selling, the would-be poet, coming down the path from the house. Selling's attitude towards

life had always seemed absurd to Geoffrey. Pen and paper and freakish ideas—that was Selling.

"I've been up to see the old folks," Selling began. "They fascinate me. I'm putting them into a poem. They've caught firm hold of the skirts of Romance. They feel every corner of the house redolent of memory. I like to talk with them."

"In one of your talks urge them to cling to the skirts of common sense," Geoffrey suggested. "I'm going in now to give a boost to sanity."

"But I tell you, Mallory, they'll break their hearts if they have to leave. You're well off, you don't need the rent yet awhile. Good Heavens, man, have you no sense of values?"

"A keen one," Geoffrey retorted. "Also," he glanced at his watch, "a sense of time. My train goes in ten minutes. I'll see the Pondons for a minute or two, then run for it."

In his hurry to open the gate he forgot the wind's impishness. It slammed the gate in his face, securing the tail of his coat in the jamb. Geoffrey was caught for a few testy minutes, a giant of determination held by the puny trifling of a gate hinge. Time too jeered at his defeat; it set a neighbouring clock chiming, showing Geoffrey that he had no time now to see the Pondons. Well, to-morrow then—

At the station he had just time to open a carriage door and jump in. But for his haste he would have selected, used discrimination. Certainly he would have avoided the compartment that already held Nora Vallance. Fighting the wind's bluster had deepened her colour; adorable tendrils of hair were loosened. She was enchantment, doubly enchanting.

"What a morning," she said. "I love it. Dear Brother Wind."

"Brother? An interfering person at all events. Already he's got my day snarled

"Clever of him," Nora laughed. "Because your days are usually the quintessence of neatness, aren't they?"

"To-day is ravelled," Geoffrey confessed. Her eyes were mirthful. He saw the corners of her mouth twitch. The strange thing was that nothing about Nora annoyed him. He could even allow her the impudence of a laugh at his expense. For a moment he had the thought that life spent in Nora's company would be full to the brim with interest. She had the knack of sending

the worst of him to the right-about. He pulled himself together with a start. His decisions were made—and unalterable. He should not marry. He had the plans of his life neatly docketed—and a wife would play havoc with pigeon-holes.

"I love a wind like this," Nora chatted. "It's tonic. Chaff blown away and the grain left—there's a moral. Nora Vallance on the rostrum! Don't look so grave, Geoffrey. Do morals send you to sleep?"

He had closed his eyes for a moment of picture making. Suppose he altered his plans? Suppose Nora could be persuaded? Suppose—he hovered perilously before drawing back into grooves. Certainly not matrimony—his pre-arranged scheme of life did not allow for it.

She was enchanting—he admitted it with chagrin. It would have been easier if he could have picked flaws. If in a single detail he could have found her less desirable—Her voice snapped the chain of his reverie.

"I'm on a shopping expedition. A new hat! And a dress—copper colour to match my hair. There's frivolity for you. Women—you know their fooleries, Geoffrey. You sit serene in your chariot and smile at us."

He could allow her to laugh at him—Nora's sting lacked poison. His close-sheathed ego stirred and grew less self-conscious when Nora laughed at him. She was the one perfect woman—but she was not in his scheme. Cast-iron plans and their fulfilment—that was Geoffrey in epitome. "I'm making a day of it," Nora was

"I'm making a day of it," Nora was saying. "I shan't try for an earlier train than the 6.40. I'm allowing myself a delectable time of colour-blending."

He made a mental note of her train. He had meant to travel home by it himself, but he would alter his plans. An earlier train, the 4.30 say. . . . And then abruptly annoyance had him by the throat. To-day plans seemed futile. The notice to the Pondons, for instance . . . his determination not to see Nora Vallance . . . his choice of an evening train . . . all these had gone by the board.

"Still Brother Wind in a jovial mood," Nora said as they came out of the station. "Hold on to your hat, Geoffrey. And goodbye. Good luck."

Well, that was over. There had been one quivering moment when she had nearly swept him off his feet. For an instant he had seen plans, schedules, neatly docketed

schemes vanish like smoke; there had been nothing left save Nora and visions of her evoking. But he had stood firm on the brink of decision. . . . And certainly he would catch the 4.30 home. He would work hard . . . anything to avoid the 6.40 and the sight of Nora, radiant after her shopping day.

Scheduled hours have a trick of crawling. Geoffrey realised the final advent of four o'clock with relief. It would be time for him to leave directly. It had been a tiresome day. And now as he prepared to close his desk a fussy client threatened delay. He came to consult Geoffrey about repairs to property owing to damage wrought by the wind. There were numerous details he wanted to go into. Geoffrey resigned himself to fate. This was too good a client to be hustled. Impatience must not be allowed Yet it raged in Geoffrey's thought. He would lose the 4.30 . . . not a chance of it now. And the 6.40 was the last train to stop at the local station. He was caught in a web, enmeshed, made a fool of. Plans? He saw them curl and shrivel like paper in a flame.

Nora... and the 6.40... the two ran together in his thoughts. He had resigned himself, and not without a sneaking sense of pleasure. They would chat together. In Nora's company, life held new guise; it was apt to show illumined and not drab. Very well then, since Chance willed it so, it must be the last train, and Nora.

He was not prepared though to see Nora on the platform with Ted Eversleigh. The fellow had airs. He posed as a man of deep experience. People who had no discrimination called him handsome. He had a certain surface charm . . . he spouted phrases and posed as a judge of art. Probably Nora was the kind of woman to be caught in so meretricious a snare. Geoffrey sought a smoking compartment and travelled in dignified solitude. It was pitiful to see a woman like Nora hoodwinked, held captive to mere surface abilities. The arrival at the local terminus held sharp annoyance. Nora swung past with a cheerful "Good evening, Geoffrey. Here's the end of a perfect day. Eversleigh's greeting was cursory—the merest acknowledgment of an insignificant unit.

At home Mallory's greeting of his son was light to the fire of his irritation.

"Hullo, Geoffrey! Everything gone off according to schedule, I suppose?"

This evening there was something derisive

in the wind's voice. Volleying about the window of Geoffrey's room it jeered at him. Listening to it he fumed in silence; until out of his silence Nora's voice seemed fused suddenly with that of the wind.

turmoil. Swaying tree-branches, swirl of leaves on the footpath—everywhere he saw unpremeditated movement, the whole world caught out of grooves and set fluttering to some newly-arisen circumstance. The wind



"Dear Brother Wind," she was laughing. Something about Nora always mated with sunshine and the swift rush of clear air. Mentally he painted her portrait, aglow and radiant, wind-ruffled and exalted. She was of the type to mate with Nature in all her moods. She was exquisite. She was the quintessence of charm. Pigeon holes? Neatly docketed schemes? These—or Nora?

Geoffrey crossed to his window and stared out. Everything seemed in a state of

laughed at Geoffrey, the groove-ridden. "Come out of it," it called. "Be a man, not a marionette."

Geoffrey moved suddenly from the window and crossed to his desk. His pen moved slowly at first, then quickened. For once he was eloquent. Nora should see that he could be the passionate lover. He would make it clear that nothing in the world mattered save his need of her.

He went out into the night's turmoil. In an odd way now the wind's energy matched

his mood. It beat about him like a comrade. Dear Brother Wind . . .

The words were on his lips as he saw Nora coming down the road.

"I'm off to the post," she told him.

too. Still, since we have to use some such medium . . ."

They walked together, erect against the storm's impact. They seemed to have found some inner citadel of achievement, with the



"He . . . gave the pieces to the whimsical care of the wind. They fluttered, danced, ran hither and thither."

"And glad of one more tussle with the storm."

"Storm?" He laughed at his own acceptance of the word. "Rather. Within and without." He bent to her suddenly. "I'm bound for the post too. My first love letter. But since I've met you, Nora, written words seem feeble . . . spoken ones

wind's batteries keeping guard over them.

"But—your plans, your pre-arranged situations? I may not always fit in, Geoffrey," Nora demurred.

Geoffrey laughed suddenly, baring his head to the wind. "Dear Brother Wind. I'll make that my slogan. Honestly, Nora, I'm out in the open to-day."

"But to-morrow?" she wondered.

"To-morrow too. See, Nora, here's one

proof."

He searched his pocket for a written sheet of paper, found it, tore it to a hundred pieces and gave the pieces to the whimsical care of the wind. They fluttered, danced, ran hither and thither, vanished presently into secret hiding-places of the wind's devising.

"What was that?" Nora asked.

"A letter to the Pondons about their house."

"Well, but—don't you want them to receive it?"

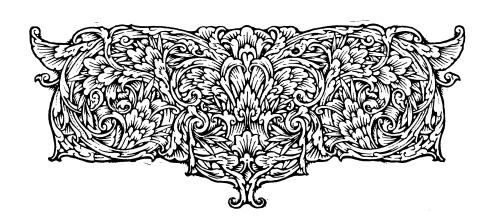
"Not that one. I'll write another telling them to stay in the place as long as they want to... It's sentiment of course weak yielding I'd have called it once. But I'll face the verdict, Nora."

"Good for you, Geoffrey," she laughed.

"And if you're sure you want me—"

"Sure ? Well, rather."

He bared his head again to the storm. "Thanks, Brother Wind," he exulted.



UPON THE HILL.

W^E stood upon a marsh-encircled hill
As branching shadows crept from fir to fir
The quiet caught us to its breast, so still
The twilight was; then, with a vivid stir,

Like trumpet-music in a symphony,
Shaking the clear green ether, faintly starred,
The sunset blared in the evening's major key
A last magnificent fanfaronade.

Our souls were lit by that compelling fire
To intimate revelation. As I told
My tale of waywardness and light desire
To you, so pure, I trembled and grew cold

Then suddenly in your kiss I found my fears All crumbling with the crumbling of the years.

ELEANOR RENARD.

THE CALL OF THE NORTH

By H. THOBURN-CLARKE

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

THE October moon hung redly bright in the chill, cold sky. A north wind rustled harshly through the dead grass and reeds that covered the long sea marsh. Beyond lay a black void, which was the sea creeping stealthily up the Estuary, sending before it long flights of oystercatchers and peewits, that wailed drearily as they passed. The Frost King was settling down on the land, and the air was bitterly cold.

Away in the distance, a curlew called in melancholy fashion, while, closer at hand, the peewits settled sadly upon the fast-disappearing mudbanks, on which they stood facing the oncoming tide, wailing their discontent for the whole world to hear. Ducks and gulls, driven from their feeding-beds at the mouth of the bay, added a noisy clamour that almost drowned the wailing of the peewits and the chill voice of the wind. From high overhead came the music as of hounds in full cry, and from the cold North a family party of white-fronted geese led by Albifrons came swiftly down. For a few seconds they were silhouetted against the red moon, a long line of wild geese, seeking winter quarters in the bogs and marshes that lay cradled between two timber-covered and rocky hills.

They were very weary and tired after their long flight, and because their ancestors for centuries had rested upon the sea marshes they planed down to sleep through the remainder of the night on the further point of the marsh, that even now was almost submerged beneath the rising tide. But instinct told them that the sea never covered the further point, and here they slept and dreamt perhaps of restful days amid the bogs, quite unheeding the danger that lurked on the further side of the sea wall. Here they folded their heads under their wings and slept, while the old gander

Albifrons remained awake, mounting guard over the others, his mate and her four young ones, hatched amid the dreary tundras of Siberia. So he had guarded them from their earliest days, and so he would guard them until the next spring, when the young ones would fly off to seek mates of their own, and he and his mate would wing their way back to the old nesting-ground in the tundra.

The night passed slowly, the moon sank and the grey morning mist swept over the Estuary. The peewits fled wailing before it, in long winding wisps of flying plover, while the oyster-catchers, in long broad V's, left for their feeding-grounds on the mudflats at the mouth of the bay. Then the resting geese raised their heads from under their wings and commenced to feed. The mist grew denser, and Albifrons raised himself almost upright, magnified by the mist into a gigantic figure, and uttered one harsh note. No one else would have heard the sound. but it was enough for the gander, and the six wild geese shot up into the air, as if hurled from a catapult. Straight up into the air they shot, and then wheeling as it were on their own axis, flew off out over the Estuary, never pausing until they had placed its wide width between them and the murmur that Albifrons had heard. Yet to any other ears less acutely trained it would have been inaudible. It was but a wildfowler intent upon shooting them crawling warily over the short grass of the marsh.

After that there was no stopping for Albifrons and his family. Through the mist they flew, mounting higher and higher until they came into the vivid sunshine that shone above the white blanket of fog that covered the earth below. It was quite midday when Albifrons back-pedalled, as it were, and dropping downwards at terrific speed, they hurtled heavily upon a wide expanse of bog.

The mist had been swept away before a soft turned out the rabbits and taken possession West wind, and the air was warm. Far of their home. How many she had killed and wide spread the green level of the bog. and eaten during the process I cannot say. the sphagnum moss flowing like an emerald but the burrow made a good earth, and sea from side to side, where the heather here, while Albifrons and his mate had been came down, and here and there a patch of soft grass called them. Here the wild geese settled down, and Albifrons. utterly tireless in the care of his family. thought nothing of his own wants, but watched while they fed. Only when they were satisfied did he pluck the green blades and eat. So the days passed quietly enough. The spot was secluded and shut in by the rocky forestcovered hills, so no one knew that year after year Albifrons and his family spent their winter here in quietness and peace. No man had ever come near it, probably NARWICH

"A long line of wild geese, seeking winter quarters in the bogs and marshes that lay cradled between two timber covered and rocky hills."

no one knew of the oasis of bog and marsh in the heart of the woods that surrounded the wild geese's haven. All the winters of Albifrons's life had been spent in the solitude of the bog. It had been his resting-place at night, and during the day he and his family had foraged far afield. But while he had been busy with family cares in the tundras things had changed. Tragedy, red-footed, had stalked through the undergrowth of the forest. It was true that last winter when the cold January moon had shed her cold light on the bog he had heard Vulpa uttering her weird love-song and wondered. He had never imagined that Vulpa and her mate would have selected his particular bog as a hunting-ground. Vulpa, then a lively young vixen, intent upon exploring the country, had found a rabbit burrow about a mile away, and had

winging their way North back to the tundras Vulpa had given birth to a family of cubs and had brought them up. But this Albifrons did not know, nor did he wonder at the scarcity of rabbits that used to gambol and scamper about on the oasis, and dash with sudden wild rushes through the narrow runaways among the bracken and heather. There was nothing to show that Vulpa was responsible for the shortage, and that the oasis of bog among the hills was her favourite hunting-ground.

The wild geese gabbled excitedly as they fed happily, or preened themselves in the October sunlight. The air was very mild, and everything was very peaceable, the golden tints of the elms contrasting with the purple tint that still lingered on the heather as if loath to yield up its vivid colouring and share the browns and gold of

the surrounding bracken. Only the sphagnum moss still showed bright splashes of emerald. A missel thrush sang tenderly a few notes as if tuning up for his wild song later in the year. A robin warbled gaily. Everything was so very peaceable. Yet Vulpa lay hidden among the bracken, eyeing the geese with greedy eye. She was out giving her almost full-grown cubs a lesson in hunting, and now while they gambolled carelessly she started to round up the geese, and drive them towards the bracken that concealed her cubs. But she was reckoning without Albifrons.

Vulpa had hardly crept a dozen paces, as she thought, behind her objective, before the wily wild gander had wheeled right around and was facing the intruder. No other eyes could have seen her, so well was her red head camouflaged by the red brown of the bracken. Only her gleaming eyes glinted slightly, and that was enough. Not that Albifrons was frightened. Not he. . . . With outstretched neck he advanced towards the vixen, and pausing about a dozen yards from where she crouched, he hissed angrily. Vulpa sprang, but the gander had doubled suddenly, and she landed on a patch of green turf, while the whole family of wild geese plunged violently into the peaty pool, and dived away to appear on a small island surrounded by water, and Vulpa, knowing that the game was finished, vanished among the bracken, and hurriedly left the place. She would have better luck next time.

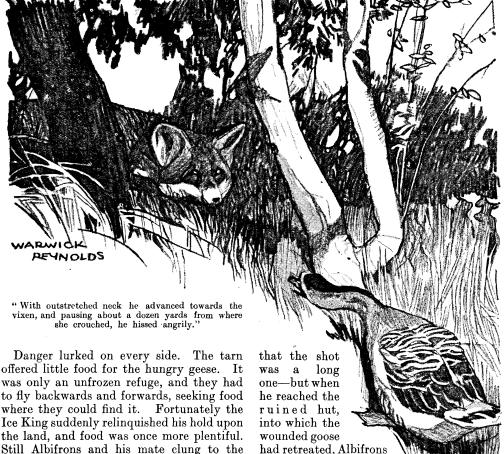
A few days later the biggest of the young geese fell a victim to his curiosity. Vulpa lay as one dead, and in spite of Albifrons's warnings, the silly young goose stepped nearer and nearer until the wily Vulpa, with a sudden spring, came to life, and the gosling was seized and killed before the rest of the wild geese could do more than utter an alarmed gabble.

The winter slipped away, and already February was waking the snowdrops into life, although a thin mantle of snow lay lightly upon the land. Vulpa was still a menace, but Albifrons had learnt caution, and she had not succeeded in killing any more of the family, although her wiles and cunning had resulted in many attempts. The Frost King soon bound the country with a band of iron, and the geese left the frozen bog, and flew back to the Estuary. Here the flowing tide kept the surface of the mudflats fairly free from ice, although miniature icebergs floated about, and ground harshly together as the sea swayed them up

and down the whole length of the Estuary. It was a time of famine. The wild fowl gathered forlornly on the flats, and hungrily sought for food. The wild geese were in a better state, for here and there among the sea marshes the grass was not frozen, and they contrived to eke out a precarious exist-Then came a day when the Ice King grew too powerful for the tides, and locked the whole Estuary in a deadly embrace. was covered with sheets of ice, and the sea flowed creakingly beneath these. rose and fell with harsh, rending sounds that echoed weirdly across the bay. But the ice was too strong for the sea to vanquish. The whole land was in the grip of a cold so intense that even the oldest inhabitant could not remember when there had been such a spell of frost.

Albifrons led his little flock further and further afield, seeking a spot where food could be obtained. Alas! in the quest of this they met with many dangers. birds of prey, knowing their dire need, and sensing their ever-weakening state, harassed them in their flight. Once a golden eagle soaring high overhead saw the little convoy, and dropped hurriedly to a lower altitude, and struck. Albifrons saved himself only by dropping like a lump of lead into a mass of frozen reeds and rushes on the edge of a mountain tarn, while the rest of the family scattered to the right and left. Fortunately the eagle was an immature bird, driven into a strange country by the lack of food, extremely nervous and uncertain of his bearings. So he mounted higher and higher, in ever-widening circles, seeking some less agile prey.

It was some hours before Albifrons could collect his family together, but at last they started again, and flew wearily out towards the West, where the sun was setting in a glory of purple and gold behind misty, dreamy mountains that appeared to have caught something of the sun's vivid radiance, for they glowed with soft purple and rose shadings. Out into this misty land of dreams Albifrons steered his little flock until just as the sun set they reached a tiny mountain tarn cradled in the heart of a bog, and although everything around them was frozen hard, the tiny tarn was rippling in the dying daylight, as if no Ice King reigned in the land. A small island floated like some magic craft in the centre. The weary geese planed down and settled on the water, then swam to the island, and here they slept, until the wintry sun rose redly in the East.



to fly backwards and forwards, seeking food where they could find it. Fortunately the Ice King suddenly relinquished his hold upon the land, and food was once more plentiful. Still Albifrons and his mate clung to the peace and quietness of the tiny tarn. The young ones wished to go back to the plenty of the bogs, but Albifrons's will was unbending. One rebelled, but Albifrons punished him so severely that none dared to defy the old gander again. So they remained.

Alas! wildfowlers had noted the morning

Alas! wildfowlers had noted the morning and evening flight of the geese. One evening, just as the sun set and the world was bathed in glory, Albifrons and his family flew swiftly over the "hide" where the wildfowlers waited. Albifrons saw the men just in time, reversed hurriedly, and flashed out of the danger zone, but two of the youngsters fell victims to a long shot, and the mother goose was winged by a still longer one. How she managed it no one could tell, but she did not come down for quite a dozen yards from the place where she was shot, and no one saw her fall. She was flying low at the time.

She came down into what must at one time have been a sort of small holding. . . . At least, there were some extremely ancient apple and plum trees, and a ruined stone hut. Only the dog saw her fall—I said

better part of valour. The old ruined hut made a good shelter, and here Albifrons mounted guard until the wing slowly mended. The ground was still strewn with the apples that, ungathered in the autumn, had fallen during the frosts, and there was plenty of food. So this question did not trouble Albifrons, but already the spring winds were sighing among the trees, and bird songs waked the dawn with faint whisperings that would soon grow louder and louder until the spring's full chorus would fill the land. Already the willow shoots had reddened, and the waking green life was budding everywhere. last remaining gosling had vanished, and Albifrons eyed the northern horizon with longing eyes. The mother goose's broken wing had mended, but she could not fly. She could only flutter heavily for a few yards, her feet pattering painfully over the ground, while her wings beat wildly in a frantic

met him with such

savage fury that the

dog fled, having decided

that discretion was the



endeavour to raise herself into the air.
Sadly and painfully she trekked down to
the boggy land far below. How she went
was a marvel, for many dangers lurked
on every side. A goose with a crookedly

mended wing is very helpless when it comes to fighting off the foe. But she crept on and on, sheltering under bushes when a peregrine seeing her wounded plight would have struck. Always Albifrons guarded and led her. In the heart of the bogs they were more secure. It was too wet for the foxes to cross, and Albifrons cared nothing for smaller creatures: one blow from his wing could disable them for ever.

The Call of the North came swiftly and strongly. No longer did little family parties of white-fronted geese dot the green lengths of the bog. . . . No longer did the excited gabble of many throats echo loudly. The squabbling was hushed, and party after party met, and together they shot up into the air, and flew off. Once or twice Albifrons shot up to join them, only to see his mate fluttering sadly down below, spreadeagled in a frantic endeavour to rise as well. He had always dropped back again, gabbling softly as the geese vanished over the far horizon.

Then came a day when the Call of the North was too strong. He shot upwards, and joining the throng vanished with them into the distant haze. The mate was deserted. In vain she fluttered and floundered over the sphagnum moss, she could not follow. In the heart of the bog lay a long, dreary pool of dark brown peat water. Already the water weeds were growing up and dotting its surface. The deserted mate sought this. Perhaps she thought she might fly up from its surface. She flapped along it time after time, but never succeeded in rising, although after many attempts she felt that she was balancing herself better. Still that did not enable her to fly.

The Call of the North sang insistently to her. Every green thing echoed the call. All around her birds were singing of nesting and love, and she had been deserted. Slowly and insistently it called, and wearily she set out to walk to the North. She had learnt the futility of fluttering, so she walked steadily onwards, threading her way through bog and scrub, wood and valley, always going north. She knew not the way, but some instinct told her, and she went.

She grew foot-sore and very weary, gaunt and thin, for with the insistent Call of the North in her blood, she could not eat. Then came a day when she could hardly walk any longer. She sank down upon the edge of a small peaty pool, and with neck outstretched she waited for the end. She lay so still that a rat, sneaking along the water's edge, thought she was dead, and determined to investigate the matter. Overhead two great black-backed gulls circled, gazing down with questioning eyes. They hung lower and lower, waiting until not a

breath of life should stir the draggled feathers of the dying goose. Not that they feared to attack the crouching bird. They had killed wounded creatures often enough in the past. But they had a wholesome fear of the power that lay behind the stroke of a wild goose's wing.

The rat had no such fear. He crept nearer and nearer, until only three feet separated him from the prostrate bird. His movements, quiet as they were, aroused her. She lifted her head, and gazing up at the setting sun; that seemed to mock her misery, uttered once more her sad shrill call for the lost mate. Twice more she called, and then her head sank slowly downwards. The rat made a tentative movement. The gulls circled still lower. Death was very near to the broken-hearted wild goose.

The rat crept cautiously closer, balancing himself for a leap upon the outstretched neck. There was a sudden swish of wings. The rat snarled savagely. He thought the gulls were descending to drive him from his prey. Then he vanished under the shelter of a clump of bog cotton. But it was not the gulls. Instead a wild gander came hurtling out of the red of the sunset, and settled, with triumphant cry, down beside the prostrate goose. It was Albifrons.

Away in the far North he had realised that life without his mate was impossible. Lonely and sad he had roamed through the wild wastes of the tundras, at times jealously guarding the old remains of last year's nest. Here he had waited and called vainly for the mate he had left behind. Then, because she had not come, he had returned to the place where he had deserted her. Her clarion call had summoned him from the skies as he flighted over, seeking her.

He was almost too late, but in the end she revived, and that is why, hidden away in a solitary bog in the heart of a wood, Albifrons and his mate built a nest, and here four eggs were laid, and four goslings were hatched and reared.

No one even suspects that a pair of white-fronted geese are nesting there. They still live happy and contented, although each spring, when the soft winds blow, the North calls them loudly and insistently. Sometimes Albifrons will join the migrating wild geese, but after flying away for a few miles, he remembers his mate. Then he returns to where she is waiting, for she has never recovered the use of her wing. Yet, knowing that he will return, she waits patiently in the heart of the bog.

MR. DEELY'S Diplodocus

By ARTHUR MILLS

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

R. DEELY stepped on board the little Paraguayan up-river steamer that was to take him into the very heart of South America with mingled feelings of misgiving and elation. He had been told that conditions of travelling in the interior of South America were severe. Now though Mr. Deely enjoyed some reputation as a traveller in his native town of Warbuckle, he had never really roughed it. In fact, it may be said at once that he had passed the greater part of his life in a central-heated bank.

His position as junior partner in the bank had enabled him to make three escapes from Warbuckle. On the first of these he had gone to Egypt, on the second to India, and on the third to the Cape. It was after his return from the Cape that he had given the series of travel lectures in Warbuckle, upon which his reputation rested.

But Mr. Deely was not content to be known only in Warbuckle. He wanted fuller recognition. He would have liked to become a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Many a pleasant dream had been his of the day when Warbuckle would be plastered with notices to the effect that on such and such an evening a lecture would be delivered by Mr. Deely, F.R.G.S.

But the R.G.S. had turned a blind eye to him. They had not elected him a Fellow, or accepted his offer to instruct their members about foreign parts.

"Your journey appears to have been an interesting one," the secretary of the Society wrote to Mr. Deely, "but we do not think the material you have collected sufficiently outstanding to warrant our including it in our winter lecture programme. Should you at any time——"etc., etc.

So Mr. Deely had to be content to deliver his travel talks in Warbuckle, and though these created much interest locally, there was always the carking worry at the back of his mind that people must be wondering why his exploits were not more generally known

It was then with set teeth that Mr. Deely boarded the steamer. When next they heard of him in Warbuckle he would either be Alfred Deely, F.R.G.S., or Alfred Deely, R.I.P.

The steamer and her sister ship left on alternate fortnights for Corumba, carrying a cargo and such persons as had interests in the Paraguayan Chaco. Mr. Deely found there were five persons to share his cabin, two of whom were Indians, one a Paraguayan nigger, and a fourth—of whom nothing could be seen but his form beneath a sheet.

Mr. Deely made the best of things, putting his bag on the bunk above the one which the two Indians shared together, and then went out on deck. He peered down into the saloon, knocked on the door of the purser's cabin and found it locked, looked with a shudder at a collection of vegetables and chunks of raw meat that were being shipped over the side in baskets, and sat down on a bale of merchandise.

The hour was 4 p.m. All day a pitiless South American sun had beaten down on the iron decks of the steamer; when it set the mosquitoes would arrive. So far as he could learn there was not a single other white man on board. Mr. Deely took from his pocket a bottle of citronella, anointed his ankles, wrists and the backs of his ears against the coming of the mosquitoes, counted his quinine tablets, and tried, by thinking of the fame that awaited him, to jolly himself up.

It was at this moment that a lank and curious-looking figure emerged from the door of Mr. Deely's cabin. The new-comer wore a shirt, trousers, shoes and socks. The

trousers were frayed, so was the shirt, his cheeks were unshaven, and all his bones stood out. Mr. Deely presumed he was the fifth occupant of the four-bunk cabin. He looked so very disreputable that Mr. Deely, who had heard that the interior of South America was one of the last places where sanctuary could be obtained from extradition laws, wondered from what country he had fled, and at the same time felt glad he was going to have the company of the Indians and the Paraguayan in his cabin for the voyage.

The stranger walked to the side, holding his head between his hands. Then he turned slowly and looked at Mr. Deely as though Mr. Deely was a great way off. Focussing him gradually, he approached.

"Whar time is this blinkin' barge

suppose' to start?"

Mr. Deely, whose small body had been braced to meet any emergency, relaxed instantly. On hearing his native tongue he felt a wild desire to throw both arms round the stranger. This he controlled and answered, his eyes alight with pleasure behind their glasses: "I don't know, sir; very glad, I'm sure, to find there is a fellow-countryman on board."

The stranger showed no similar enthusiasm, and back into Mr. Deely's mind came the original idea that he might be a fugitive from justice. Perhaps the fellow would think he was a detective. He decided to explain that he was in no way connected

with the police.

"I am travelling in South America for the first time," said Mr. Deely. "I heard in Buenos Aires that if I came up to Paraguay I should find river steamers making periodical voyages into the interior. I believe the interior of South America is very well worth visiting. My interests are—er—geographical research."

"Huh! Mebbe I can show you something in that line": the stranger withdrew to the cabin and came back holding a large paper package in both arms. Unwrapping the package he laid on the deck the most enormous bone Mr. Deely had ever seen.

"What d'ye make of that?"

"It's a bone," said Mr. Deely.

"Yep! But what sort of a bone?"

Mr. Deely turned the bone over. It was so very large that it could only have belonged to an elephant. He said as much.

"That's not an elephant's," said the stranger, "that's something's foot; you never saw an elephant with a foot that size."

"Not an elephant!" repeated Mr. Deely, taking off his glasses and wiping them.

"No," said the stranger; "the animal that had that foot would have been twice the size of an elephant—three times maybe."

"W-where did you find it?"

The stranger pointed up-stream where the Chaco lay, stretching as far as the eye could see—swamps and waving pampas grass, forests of thorny trees, thickets of impenetrable cane, jacarandas, quebrachos. Mr. Deely knew that somewhere in those impenetrable regions there were savage Indians that had never yet known white man's rule, besides creeks in which alligators wallowed and electric eels.

"'Bout six days from here," said the stranger. "I have got a camp and do a bit of garca-hunting."

"What's a garca?"

"Why, the birds they get feathers from for women's hats—egrets they call 'em, don't they?"

"Yes," said Mr. Deely primly, "but you are not allowed to bring them into England

now; egret-hunting is very cruel."

"No more'n boiling lobsters, that I can see. But I don't want to bring 'em into England; mine go to Paris; only that scab of an agent wouldn't buy any this time. Why, this bone now——" he looked at the enormous bone on the ground—" a year ago they'd have been glad to give a few dollars for that here as a curiosity; but this time no one would look at it. Glad I didn't bring any more along."

The full significance of the bone, and of what the man was saying now, burst on Mr.

Deelv's mind.

"Are there any more like it?" he asked.

"Any amount," said the egret-hunter.
"Well"—in his effort to control his excitement Mr. Deely spoke with great deliberation—"I think very possibly that if you could show me where they are it might be—er—to your—advantage."

The egret-hunter looked doubtfully at Mr.

Deely.

"İt's pretty rough going to get there," he said; "two days by canoe beyond the place where I get off; once you get up there you might get stuck for weeks, according to the rains."

"I'd like to come all the same," said Mr. Deely firmly.

The remains of a prehistoric monster, unknown and unrecorded! Not once in a lifetime, not once in the last four generations had such a chance occurred. As soon as he

could he slipped off to his cabin and plunged into the small library of books about South America that he had brought with him. Under chapter headed "Early History" he read as follows:

"There is perhaps no region in the world of which the early history is so little known as the interior of South America. But one thing is certain, that the area north of Paraguay must be as old as any other existing part of the surface of the globe. Clear evidence of this has been found from time to time. In 1867 Professor Rumble

undoubtedly the largest of all the pre-oolithic mammoths. According to measurements from the portion of Professor Rumble's skeleton in the British Museum, its foot alone would have been twice the size of an elephant's."

"Twice the size of an elephant's!" repeated Mr. Deely ecstatically, "that's just what the chap said that found it, and he

knows where there are more."

Already in imagination Mr. Deely saw himself on a platform before the largest gathering ever assembled of members of the



brought back an almost complete skeleton of a Diplodocus."

Mr. Deely picked up a popular encyclopædia and searched feverishly through the D's.

"Diplodocus. This animal is generally admitted among scientists to be the earliest of the mammoths. The species has long been extinct. Little is known of its habits, except that it could only live on marshy soil, and was non-carnivorous. In common with other animals of the pre-oolithic age, there is no doubt that the species died out when the food that nourished it became no longer procurable. The Diplodocus was

Royal Geographical Society, reading his paper on the discovery of remains of the mammoth known as "Deely's Diplodocus."

Six days later all that mosquitoes, sand flies, garrapatos and the innumerable pestiferous insects of the South American interior had left of Alfred Deely crawled from the bottom of a canoe. McBade, for so the egret-hunter said he was, accompanied him. McBade was none the worse for the journey—it took a pretty brave mosquito to try to bite him. He at once set about making camp.

Though half dead from the journey, Deely wanted to go off at once to the point where

McBade had left the remainder of the skeleton. But McBade would not agree to this; he was already regretting having allowed the little banker to accompany him, the more so as it became evident how poorly his physique befitted him for the conditions of an egret-hunter's life. As for the project of the Diplodocus, McBade thought little of this. His own experience was that they would give only a few dollars for old bones in Asuncion, and he did not believe it would benefit them much if they found a skeleton entire. No, egrets were what paid, and when McBade found Deely could not shoot he was disgusted with him. It was as incomprehensible to him that a man could not shoot, as it was to Alfred Deely to discover that McBade could neither read nor write.

McBade, Mr. Deely felt, was one of those queer characters to be met with only in outof-the-way places. He had come to South America a raw, illiterate farm-hand from Australia with a shipload of others, lured by one of the innumerable free-land schemes. Left to shift for himself, he had drifted further and further into the interior, and finally settled down to an egret-hunter's life. The feathers which he worked so hard to get, and sold for a few dollars in Asuncion, fetched many pounds in the Rue de Rivoli, but McBade did not know this, or care, as long as he got enough money to buy liquor and fresh ammunition during his annual visit to the town. For the rest of the year he lived entirely by himself up a remote tributary of the Paraguay in the Chaco.

It is certain that no other white man had ever been to the region where he took Deely, and providential that the Indians that peopled those parts had not come upon him, or he would have been eaten long ago. Alfred Deely at first did not appreciate how utterly divorced from all civilisation they were.

Finding Deely could not shoot, McBade appointed him cook, and also set him, to his disgust, to pluck the egret feathers. He became surly, and treated the little banker with no more respect than if he'd been a dog. To Mr. Deely's repeated inquiries when they were going out to find the remains of the Diplodocus, he told him to shut up, pointing to the river.

"I told you the water would fall; you'll be up here weeks now, or mebbe months: you get on with them feathers, and careful how you handle 'em, or I'll kill no more meat for you," he said, glowering at the little banker.

So one day succeeded another. Each morning Mr. Deely rose at dawn, made tea from McBade's store of dried ilex leaf, cooked some meat from whatever was in the larder -a carpencho (water hog) or small deer perhaps—then woke McBade. The latter, after breakfasting, set out for his day's work, tramping miles through the Chaco in search of the elusive egret. Meanwhile Mr. Deely plucked any feathers there were to be plucked, tended the mandioca plot, or pounded maize. The estate was entirely self-supporting. To keep him at home and at work while he was away, McBade told Deely that there were cannibal Indians in the district who would surely eat him if they found him, and on evenings when his temper was bad after a poor day's hunting he would threaten to give Mr. Deely to the Indians in any case.

At first sheer terror of his wild, uncivilized surroundings was sufficient to keep Mr. Deely in camp. But gradually he grew used to the solitude, less frightened of the strange jungle sounds. At last, one day, great v daring he set off for himself to try to find the remains of the Diplodocus. McBade had made some kind of a track through the brush to his hunting grounds, and this Mr. Deely followed. Some little distance from the camp he was struck by the appearance of a shrub—a kind of giant cactus as large as a fir tree, with great barbed arms sticking out in all directions, and right in the heart a central stalk, at the end of which there was a huge yellow fruit about the size of a water melon.

He was approaching the plant to get a better view when he stumbled on something in the grass and fell asprawl. Picking himself up he raked the grass aside and saw a yellow bone of immense size. Eager search produced more bones, and Mr. Deely, with a thrill of excitement, realised he had come on the remains of the Diplodocus. He selected one of the smaller bones, which he could just manage to carry, and staggered back with it to camp.

On hearing McBade returning he hurriedly hid the bone, and a moment later was thankful, for the egret-hunter was in a bad temper, having for the second day found no egrets, and any reference to the Diplodocus that night, however slight, might easily have cost Mr. Deely dearly.

"Something is skeering them birds," said McBade gloomily; "there are plenty of 'em, but they are so wild on the wing you can't get near 'em; they just fly round and round like a lot of blasted swallows. Ter-morrer" -he surveyed Deely severely-" you'll come with me; mebbe if you get around the other side of 'em it'll put 'em over to me. You'm picked all the feathers, an' you ain't got nothing to do till I've got some more.

So next morning at dawn the pair set out, Mr. Deely heavy at heart, for he was longing to disinter some more of the precious skeleton, and McBade grim-visaged.

"Now," said McBade, when they had tramped some miles, "you see that bit of a laguna there; jes' go quietly round to the fur side and then work back towards me."

Mr. Deely set off. To go round the lake he had a circuit of at least five miles to make. Few can imagine what each step into the jungle cost the little banker, who for all his reputation in Warbuckle as a traveller in the wilds, had never been in a boat of less than 8,000 tons before this expedition.

Now he was in truth in a region utterly unknown and unexplored. In the heart of the Paraguayan Chaco there might be anything. Those cacti now! Mr. Deely saw another of the huge prickly plants with the yellow fruit, beneath which he had found the remains of the Diplodocus. Who had ever seen a cactus that size? As large as a tree it was, and there was something almost human in the plant's forbidding aspect. Those great spiked branches, stretching outwards like arms, seemed to be guarding the yellow fruit. A row of such cacti would have made a formidable defensive line for an army—better than the most cunningly laid barbed wire.

Then there might be Indians, or jaguars, or pythons in his path. On the rare evenings when McBade consented to talk it was always of such matters. Mr. Deely remembered with a shudder McBade describing how one day, walking in long grass, he had stepped right into the coils of a python, how the python had enfolded him, and how he had just been able to save himself by keeping his arms free and putting his gun down its throat. Supposing he stepped into the coils of a python! He had no gun; the python would just crush him, and then pull him out longways and swallow him. Or perhaps he would be pulled out longways first. Ough! Mr. Deely shuddered as he noticed how long the grass was where he was walking. How could he see if there was a python lying there or not? Then the jaguars that lay along the branches of trees and jumped on a man's shoulders as he

To say nothing of the possibility that an Indian was tracking him silently the whole time. Mr. Deely shuddered again and looked round to see how much distance there was between himself and McBade. would have given all he possessed to feel like McBade did about the jungle, no more concerned to walk about in it than if he were strolling down Piccadilly.

As it was, his progress in search of those beastly egrets was a martyrdom. Now he saw a long black object in the ground, around which he made an enormous detour thinking it might be a snake—though it was actually the branch of a dead tree. Now he stopped dead in his tracks hearing a cracking of twigs, and imagined himself stalked by an Indian or a jaguar. Once he actually trod on a young armadillo and jumped three clean feet in the air. But though his eyes goggled like a frog's, and the sweat of nervousness poured off him, Alfred Deely held upon his way.

Meanwhile McBade, having chosen a grassy bank, lay down beside his gun. Heaven knew how long it would take the little fool to get round the lake, or if he would find any egrets. But there must be egrets somewhere, McBade could not understand their scarcity and wildness during the last few days. Presently he gave up trying to, turned upon his face, and closed his eyes.

McBade awoke suddenly, as men who live alone in desert places awake at the first sign of danger. Instantly his hand reached for his gun. But something held his arms, something clawed at him frantically. Wrenching himself round McBade found himself looking into the convulsed face of Alfred Deely, who had thrown himself flat upon the egret-hunter as he slept, and was clutching him as though he was life itself.

McBade indignantly pushed the little banker away and rose to his feet.

"What the purple blazes is the matter with you?" he asked.

For some moments Mr. Deely could not speak. At last he managed to articulate:

"I...I've seen a n'animal.

following me."

"Well," said McBade, "why shouldn't it? Liked the look of you, I suppose. was it—a jaguar?"

"N-no . . . i-it looked like a giraffe."

"A giraffe!"

"Only bigger . . . body like a n'elephant's ... an' ... an' three legs ... oh! its

McBade caught Mr. Deely by the scruff



"The tree up which McBade had climbed was swaying horribly."

of the neck and put his nose to his mouth; he released him with a sign of relief. "If you'd been getting at that rum I'd have killed you; we've got little enough left as it is. Now, what is all this you are talking about?"

Mr. Deely managed to compose himself sufficiently to give a coherent account of the matter that had upset him. Apparently he had seen some egrets on the far side of the The birds were flying high, and circling, as though disturbed. Pressing forward to carry out his order and drive the egrets to McBade, Mr. Deely had found himself in a grove of the huge cacti, of which he had seen solitary specimens elsewhere. He was about to try to work his way through the grove, when his attention was arrested by something moving. Getting closer he saw a pair of eyes peering out at him from the topmost cacti branches, set in a head rather like a camel's. "Only I knew it wasn't a camel," said Mr. Deely, "because it was at least twenty feet tall. An' then I . . . I . . . saw its body . . . t-twice as big as a n'elephant's, an' . . . an' it looked up . . . an' began to walk towards me."

He was continuing his description when McBade picked up his gun: "Well, we'll soon see what it is anyway. Come on, show the way."

They proceeded back through the jungle by the way Deely had come. They had gone some little distance when McBade stopped short, and Mr. Deely, who had dropped from his post as leader to a point some three feet behind, cannoned into him. McBade stared up at the sky where a flight of egrets could be seen circling.

"I knew there was something scaring those darned birds," he said.

Next moment he felt a sensation as though a rat had bitten him in the arm as Mr. Deely's fingers dug into flesh.

"L-look!" said Mr. Deely.

McBade looked, and what he saw for a moment disturbed even his composure. A hundred yards away a huge animal was approaching one of the cacti with yellow The animal appeared to have, as Mr. fruit. Deely had described, three legs, a neck like a giraffe's, and a body like an elephant's. A peculiarity noticeable was that its third leg could apparently be used as a tail. Thus when walking it held its head high, but at rest the huge neck dropped to a horizontal position and the third leg stuck out be-Just by the cactus it stopped and looked at the two men; then lowered its third leg, balanced itself, and stretched out its preposterous neck for the yellow fruit. Having secured the fruit it turned round. holding the melon in its enormous mouth, and-Deely could have sworn-grinned at them.

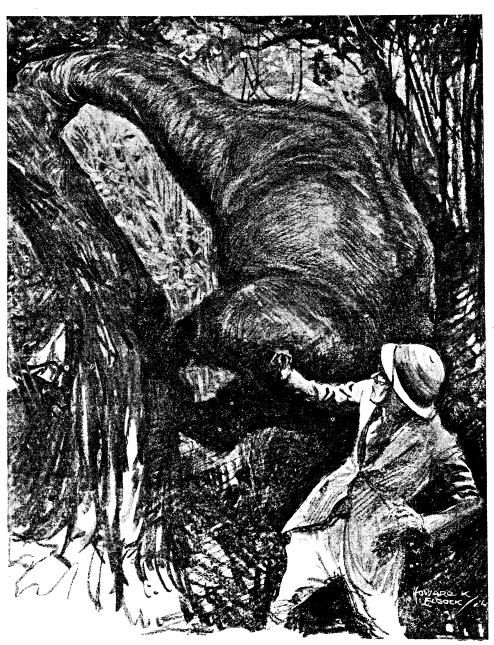
"W-what is it?" he asked.

"How should I know?" answered McBade, who, living in unexplored parts, had seen many strange animals, and in any case was too illiterate to be a naturalist. He was, however, obviously impressed by the creature's size. "He's a big'un, any way; mebbe

those bones I found belonged to 'is mate."

It was then, in a flash as it were, that it dawned on Mr. Deely that he was standing

The book had said that the Diplodocus had lived in this particular part of South America; further, that though the creature was pre-



"Sam had his feet planted in a rigid tripod and was tugging at it for all he was worth."

in the presence of the most stupendous discovery of the last thousand years. All information checked out to prove that the animal standing in front of them was a live Diplodocus.

sumed to be extinct it was evident that as the district was still unexplored no one could be certain of the fact. But the most convincing evidence was the matter of the yellow fruit. It had been clearly said that the reason for the decease of the prehistoric mammoths had been lack of the special foods on which they were nourished. Obviously the Diplodocus relished the yellow fruit of the giant cactus. McBade, who had travelled in the wilder parts from one end of South America to another, admitted he had never seen this particular kind of cactus elsewhere.

In the flush of his excitement Alfred Deely forgot all fear. What a discovery! What an epoch-making event! He started to approach nearer to the Diplodocus, when a voice sternly called to him to "Stand clear!"

"What are you going to do?" he shouted. "Shoot it," answered McBade.

Next moment a report rang out, and Mr. Deely covered his eyes. He looked up a moment later. The Diplodocus had dropped the fruit from his mouth, and was regarding them with a pained expression. It had raised one of its monstrous legs and was gently scratching itself. The shot had evidently made no more impression upon it than a pea upon the armour plating of a battleship. Nevertheless, the expression in its eyes, as they rested on McBade, was not effusive.

Mr. Deely saw McBade reloading. His sensations may be compared to those of an M.F.H. surprising a farmer firing upon a fox, or a mother who sees a neighbour strike her child. He rushed at McBade, his fists clenched.

"Don't you do that again," he shouted furiously.

"Why, that's the darned thing that's been scaring my egrets," said McBade aggrieved.
"You leave it alone," said Mr. Deely.
"I found it, and I won't have it ill-treated."

That night the pair held conference in camp. For hours Mr. Deely tried to explain to the hunter what the discovery of the Diplodocus meant. The prospect of fame appealed to McBade little, but when Deely said that if they could only get it back alive to Europe they would make their fortunes he became more attentive. Not that he could see even now why the creature should be so valuable. It was just a strange animal, and he had seen many strange animals since he came to live in the Paraguayan Chaco.

Ways and means for getting the Diplodocus to civilisation were next discussed. McBade thought Deely would have to go down to Asuncion and charter one of the barges used for transporting quebracho extract.

But until the rains came and the river rose again it was impossible even to make

the passage by canoe. So it came about that the three were destined to spend many weeks together.

Early in their relationship the Diplodocus came to be known as Sam—why, no one knew, except that he had to be called something. They had not been long together before they split up into cliques. Sam and Mr. Deely formed one party and McBade the other.

Sam, from the first, had shown himself perfectly well disposed to human beings. and apart from his intrinsic value, Mr. Deely genuinely liked him. The little banker would spend hours in the great creature's company, fascinated by the way it procured its food. The purpose of the third leg was soon apparent to him: it served the double purpose for the creature to balance its unwieldy body—so much longer in front than behind—and could also be used as the third spar of a tripod, to enable it to procure its food. Evidently the giant cacti formed its sole pasturage. Moreover, the Diplodocus appeared to be the only animal living big enough and strong enough to procure the food.

Sam not only ate the fruit of the cactialways before swallowing it turning round with the great yellow melon in his mouth and giving Deely that delicious grin-but he also relished the lower juicy part of the central stalk on which the fruit grew. get this he would first firmly plant his three legs triangle fashion, stretch out his neck, take the stalk well in the middle and tug. Mr. Deely imagined that the strength required would be as great as to uproot a wellgrown tree. But Sam had it, though sometimes when the stalk was particularly tough, and his battle prolonged, he would emit a noise something between the trumpeting of an elephant and the roar of a lion, which plainly showed that, in spite of his outward placidness, he had a temper.

Sam gave evidence of his temper in rather unexpected fashion. From the day that the egret-hunter had fired at him there had been a coolness between them. McBade was sceptical that the creature had any real value, and persisted with his ridiculous charge that it was frightening his egrets.

One morning Mr. Deely and McBade were breakfasting, and McBade was outlining his plans for the day. The day before he had marked a small coppice close to the camp where several egrets came to roost at night. He proposed to go and lie up there and get them as they came in twos and threes. Mr.

Deely thought the idea excellent, though he deprecated the extra work of plucking feathers.

Shortly afterwards McBade went off, leaving Deely to clear up camp. Mr. Deely had finished his work, and was sitting eating his frugal lunch, when a sound made him look up. Through the undergrowth he saw Sam approaching. The great creature lumbered to the edge of the clearing, then came to a halt, neck and tail outstretched.

Mr. Deely munched a piece of mandioca, and cut himself some more meat. He was conscious that Sam was watching every mouthful he took intently, and when Sam emitted a sound remarkably like a whine he guessed the reason. Taking a piece of mandioca from the pot he tossed it across to the creature. Sam sniffed the mandioca, took it in his mouth, and spat it out again. Mr. Deely tried him with a bit of meat, with no better result. He was distressed, for Sam was evidently hungry; then he suddenly remembered having seen some of the big cacti just behind the camp.

Getting up he whistled softly to Sam,

who followed him to the cacti.

"There you are, old boy," he said, point-

ing out the fruit.

The great animal was evidently very hungry indeed, for he made a most unseemly grab at the first fruit he saw and wolfed it without his usual gracious smile.

Mr. Deely mentioned the matter to McBade at tea time, saying he thought it possible that as the species began to die out they grew less clever at finding their own food.

McBade, preoccupied with the grand battue of egrets that was to take place that evening, only growled that it would be a good thing when the species became extinct altogether. Later he left for the coppice armed with his gun.

Mr. Deely had to rely on McBade's account for what subsequently happened. Apparently McBade took up a well-concealed position behind the coppice and waited for the egrets. He had been there half an hour when he sighted the first pair approaching. They were flying low and an easy mark. To his extreme annoyance, just as he was preparing to fire, the birds altered direction, one flying wide to the right and the other to the left; the same thing happened with the next pair; then, after an interval, a flight of six egrets appeared. They were heading straight for the coppice, when suddenly they wheeled and retreated in

confusion. McBade got up and went round to the other side of the wood to see what was the matter. There stood Sam, by the group of cacti Mr. Deely had shown him, placidly chewing his last stalk. In his fury McBade raised his gun and let off both barrels. That this time they found a better mark was evident from the abrupt way Sam lowered his third leg, which could be used also as a tail.

It was at this moment that Mr. Deely, drowsing over the camp fire, heard the peculiar roaring as of lions, bears, and thunder which he had only heard once before, on the occasion when Sam grew angry because he could not dislodge the cactus stem.

The roaring continued and Mr. Deely went off to see what was the matter. He arrived in the nick of time, for the tree up which McBade had climbed was swaying horribly; Sam had his feet planted in a rigid tripod, and was tugging at it for all he was worth.

At Mr. Deely's approach the great creature quietened down and eventually lumbered off into the forest. But that night matters came to a head between Deely and McBade.

"Either that animal goes or I do," said McBade. "If you hadn't turned up he'd have had that tree down in another minute and killed me."

Mr. Deely appreciated that his partner really had cause to be annoyed, but at the same time would have given his own life to save Sam's. Looking at the river, he remarked that it was rising, and suggested it might be possible to try to reach Asuncion now to fetch Sam's barge.

McBade thought this might be so, but declined to accompany Mr. Deely.

"Owing to that accursed animal," he said, "I've hardly got any egrets this year at all; he may be as valuable as you say, or he may not, but you don't catch me going down to Asuncion till I have got some feathers."

"You are going to stay here then?" said Mr. Deely.

"I am-till you come back."

Mr. Deely looked anxious. "Will you promise to be kind to Sam?"
"Kind to——!" Words choked McBade.

"Kind to—!" Words choked McBade.
"If not, I won't go away and leave him

with you."

"Look here," said McBade, "I'm not going to stay here in any case. For one thing, there isn't a blasted egret left for twenty miles; for another, I don't trust that animal. I believe he means to get me. seen a buffalo look that way, and it stalked me for days. I won't kill the brute, 'cos I can't; there ain't a gun made powerful enough to do it. But I'm going up to the mountains." McBade pointed to the snowcapped Andes rising in the distance. "There'll be something to shoot up there right enough. If he stops here till you come back with that barge all's well, but if he follers me to them hills, Heaven help him!"

Mr. Deely said nothing further. He saw that McBade was as angry now as Sam had been that evening. But when he embarked in his canoe next morning he had a sinking feeling in his heart. It was almost as though he guessed, seeing Sam and the egrethunter standing on the bank, that when he returned he would only find one of them alive.

A month later Mr. Deely did come back. He had procured a splendid barge. He saw the smoke of the camp fire some distance, and presently saw McBade. McBade looked plump and well content with life. were strung all round from bamboo poles.

"How's Sam?" asked Mr. Deely eagerly. "He's all right," answered McBade, then pointed to the rows of egrets. "What d'ye think of that little lot? Not so bad, eh?"

"I knew Sam wouldn't drive the egrets

away," said Mr. Deely.

"He isn't driving 'em away-now, anyway," said McBade: "more here than there's ever bin." He pointed up stream to where a great number of garcas blancas, with a few of the rarer garcas moros (blue egrets), could be seen circling.

Though McBade seemed perfectly satisfied with himself and at peace with the world, there was something in his manner that Mr. Deely did not quite like; he felt his companion was not being quite frank with him, holding something back, as it were.

Later he took McBade to see the barge he had brought up for Sam; it was a magnificent barge, royalty could have travelled in

"I've got a refrigerating plant too," said Mr. Deely.

"What for?"

"Sam's fruit: we shall have to carry enough to last him for his trip home and

"Who's going to pick it?"

"I am; I've brought a special ladder."

"Do you mean to tell me you mean to

pick enough fruit to last that animal six months? Why, it will take a lifetime, and who's going to help me with those feathers? I was counting on you."

"I shall have to pick the fruit first."

McBade looked thoughtful; he hadn't foreseen this development. It was essential that he should have some help in plucking his egret feathers.

When, next morning, Mr. Deely, instead of setting to the work that was required of him, announced that he was going off to look for Sam, McBade decided it was time matters were brought to a head.

"I'll come with you," he announced.

"That's very kind of you," said Mr.

"You won't find him unless I do." Once again there was something sinister in McBade's manner that caused the banker misgivings.

"Is he all right?" he asked.

"Yes," answered McBade slowly; "he's all right . . . where he is."

They set off for the foothills of the Andes.

Presently they began to climb.

"He seems to have strayed some distance," said Mr. Deely, looking back to where their camp lay, a mere speck below by the silver line of the river.

"I told you I was going up to the hills,"

said McBade.

"And you took Sam with you?"

McBade turned round savagely on the little banker. "I did not; he followed me; tracked me day and night and "-the egrethunter's eyes narrowed—"it wasn't out of motives of affection either."

"I don't think Sam would hurt a fly."

"Wouldn't he! That's all you know. I had to sleep up a tree every night."

Mr. Deely was now convinced a disaster had occurred.

"Where is he now?" he repeated.

"I'll show you," said McBade.

They ascended a considerable height, following a trail used by the Chaco Indians to get from Paraguay to Bolivia. Presently they came to a ravine, so black and deep that Mr. Deely, peering down into it, could neither see the bottom nor hear a pebble drop. The ravine was bridged by one of the flimsy structures that the Indians make. Just some logs with brushwood laid across. Mr. Deely was going to step on to the bridge when McBade laid a hand on his arm.

"Mind where you are going; that isn't very safe." He pointed down into the

blackness of the ravine: "That's where Sam is," he said triumphantly. "Yes, sir," continued McBade, "that's where he is; he followed me all day and he followed me all night, though I threw things at him and shot at him, and lit fires to keep him away; he scared my egrets; and I don't mind admitting he was beginning to scare me; then, when I was just about going mad, we came to that bridge there with a spar missing, and he fell through it."

"Did you tamper with the bridge?"

The egret-hunter saw the little banker's eyes fixed on him like two red pin-points, and lied to save his life.

"N-no," he said.

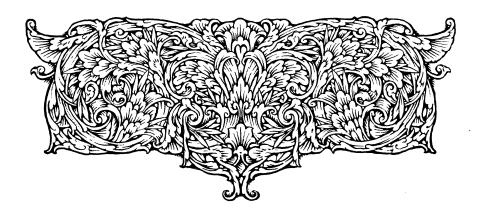
Sometimes a little man wearing spectacles enters the central hall of one of our large museums, and goes up to the skeleton of Professor Rumble's Diplodocus.

There it stands, monstrous and grotesque,

neck outstretched just as Sam's used to be when seeking the fruit he loved. The visitor's thoughts are far from the dusty museum. These ancient bones have no significance for him. He is thinking of Sam as he last remembers him, with one of the great yellow cacti fruit in his mouth, head turned sideways, smiling his own inimitable smile.

"See him?" says a hall porter, taking round a group of tourists, pointing to the solitary little man. "Knows a lot about them prehistoric animals. He's Mr. Deely, F.R.G.S."

Meanwhile, Sam lies at the bottom of a crevasse in the Andes Mountains, waiting for the day when the seas give up their dead, or man mining for gold or coal shall come upon his bones. And McBade has prospered, for egrets are once more plentiful in the Paraguayan Chaco.



THEN AND NOW.

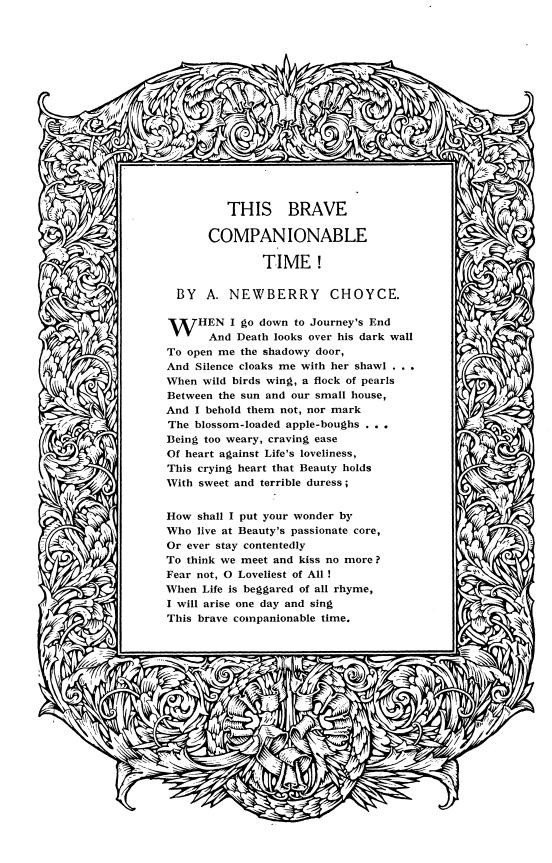
H^E drew the guns in those dark days, Long days of weariness and pain. To-day he treads familiar ways, And draws the harvest home again.

The children gathered flowers at dawn,
And decked his mane with mute caress.

From golden fields the golden corn
Was heaped in burnished loveliness.

He drew the guns with patient pain
Along the unfamiliar road,
Now up the winding downland lane
He proudly draws the harvest load.

L. G. MOBERLY.





"'It's—preposterous! You know I can't repay you just now——' Mike's countenance betrayed neither pity nor contempt. He said evenly: 'You know that this was to be the last time—on your own word of honour.'"

THE BARTERED JOURNEY

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

F the two men facing one another across the office desk it was obviously the younger who held command of the situation. Equally palpable was the fact that that situation was fraught with no mean issues for each of them. And although fate had staged the scene in the senior partner's sanctum of the business offices of Cunliffe and Hale, the affair under discussion was not connected with that business at all.

Ronald Cunliffe, seated at the desk, his head bent, one hand gripping the desk edge, the other clenching and unclenching on the papers methodically arranged there, perhaps thought dully of those other occasions when the place he occupied had represented power and authority; when to the dispensing of these things he had been able to bring all the concentration of a clear mind; when his position as the senior partner had been a tacit unquestioned thing . . . when life had been easy and simple, holding The Business, and a few weeks' shooting or fishing . . . and a pleasant sense of serene proprietorship of Francesca Hamilton.

But that was months ago-months since

he had experienced that security and well-being—months since Mike Hale had ceased to be the intelligent, able junior he could praise or blame, and became, instead, the keeper of his honour.

Borrowing from Mike had seemed, those months ago, so simple and easy; even until quite recently the steadily increasing debt had not troubled him, for with the gambler's gift for such optimism he had thrust the thought of it aside. His luck, he argued, was certain to turn: he could not always lose: and then Mike should be repaid as speedily as he had lent. It was not more than a week ago that, for the first time, he realised the enormity of the sum with a sudden chill little shock-with a vague amazement, too, that Mike should have been able to lend it. Mike must have saved very rigorously during the past three years of their partnership. Evidently Mike didn't gamble. . . .

So Ronald Cunliffe, who did, argued desperately that his luck must turn—soon.

It had not turned, and now Mike was facing him across the office desk, explaining in a quiet, hard voice that this was the end.

To gamble and lose and borrow from Mike—and gamble and lose and borrow again—of course it could not go on indefinitely.... But Cunliffe, weakly and unreasonably, was cursing Mike.

"It's—preposterous! You know I can't

repay you just now-"

Mike's countenance betrayed neither pity

nor contempt. He said evenly:

"You know that this was to be the last time—on your own word of honour." Cunliffe made an impatient gesture.

"I cannot help my confounded luck, can I?" he said sullenly. "If you gave me another month or two—less than that——"

Mike Hale did not even answer.

For already they had discussed the affair for an hour—already Cunliffe, alternately persuasive, indignant—trying to be dominant—had pleaded for and demanded "time." And already Mike had refused, quite firmly and definitely.

The stark facts remained—Mike had the whip hand, and he, Mike's senior, must face

the world a ruined man.

Strangely, perhaps, he did not at first think of Francesca Hamilton. So that Mike's words came with a little lash to his consciousness of this added aspect of the situation.

"Didn't you tell me the other day that you were going to Madeira with the Hamil-

tons on their yacht?"

Cunliffe looked up sharply.

"You know I have to go—to look up Chalmers about this dispute at the harbour. Hamilton heard I was going, and invited me to make the outward journey with—with their party." He broke off with a violent, uncontrolled exclamation. "Confound you! What have my affairs to do with you?"

"A good deal," said Mike slowly, in his deep, matter-of-fact voice that contrasted so strongly with Cunliffe's. "A good deal. That's obvious, isn't it?" He stood looking down at Cunliffe with steady, grave eyes that held neither triumph nor antagonism. "And this particular affair—the voyage, I mean—can square things, if you like."

Cunliffe's "What do you mean?" rang with mingled eagerness and suspicion. Suspicion was not frequently felt by those who had dealings with Mike Hale, who, with whatever else one might discredit him, was a person of great directness.

He was direct now.

"I mean that if you will arrange for me to go in your place, you can give me a fresh I O U for half what you owe—destroying the one I hold—and that shall be payable at your own convenience."

Cunliffe stared at him, dully, incredulously, at a loss because of the utter unexpectedness of the proposition. That Mike should offer to cancel half his debt and postpone the payment of the remainder indefinitely, merely in return for the opportunity of a six days' trip in a steam-yacht, seemed fantastic and impossible. Yet Mike was quite palpably serious. . . Standing before his senior, he continued to elucidate the plan.

"No one need know the reason. You can tell the Hamiltons that business here demands your personal attention, so you are forced to send your—subordinate"—Mike did not smile—"to settle the lesser affair. And that if their invitation still holds good——"

"But, confound it all—" Cunliffe found his voice to break in irritably, "I can't do

that! They don't know you!"

Mike said simply:

"Yes. We met about a fortnight ago."

"You met—whom?"

"Sir George and his son and daughter."
"You did not tall me " Cupliffe was

"You did not tell me——" Cunliffe was frowning sullenly at the onyx paper-weight on his desk.

"No. Why should I?" said Mike. Then, as Cunliffe did not answer, "But it is a fortunate chance—if you care to agree to my suggestion. . . ."

"And if not?" demanded Cunliffe.

Mike looked at him thoughtfully.

"If not—the fresh I O U won't be needed."

The expression on Cunliffe's countenance then was not good to see. For the second time it held suspicion—and that was echoed in his voice.

"Do you expect me to believe that you're ready to make me a present of a sum like that just for the opportunity of going to Madeira on a yacht? Because, if you do, you're mistaken... There's some reason—" he laughed with a sort of ugly excitement. "I tell you I know there's some reason, and I'll find it out——"

"You needn't," said Mike pleasantly. "I'll tell you. It's for the opportunity of six days in the company of Miss Hamilton."

For the space of a moment Cunliffe stared at him, reddening slowly. Then he laughed

"You're an outspoken young fool, anyway," he sneered. "And how do you know

that Miss Hamilton has any desire for your

company?"

"I don't," said Mike. "You see, that's just it. I want the opportunity of finding out."

"And you shan't have it!" Cunliffe shouted suddenly. "By Heaven, you shan't have it! What right have you—" his voice trailed off suddenly, impotently, as he realised Mike's advantage—the whip hand.
... He cursed Mike afresh.

"You know the terms," said Mike.

Yes, he knew the terms. Knew that the man before him, his junior and subordinate, represented the fate that raised an encircling barrier, a barrier of his own building; a barrier with but one way out—one way out. . . .

"You have no right," he said, "and so—you'd like to buy one. That's it, isn't it? Buy it with hard cash! I'm sure Miss Hamilton would be interested to hear it. She is, you know, rather an idealist."

For the first time, then, it seemed that Mike Hale checked with an effort a movement towards his senior. There was an odd little gleam in his deep-set eyes that the latter did not miss. Conscious of the inexorable fate that offered him that one way out, Cunliffe pursued his advantage with malicious deliberation.

"When she hears of it—she will no doubt find it—amusing. The notion that she should have been concerned with such a bargain——"

"Perhaps," said Mike, quietly. And he

waited for Cunliffe to continue.

It was that quality that so goaded Cunliffe, himself a person of no great gifts of endurance and stability. And, more than any words could have done it, it emphasised the bitter truth—that Mike held the whip hand. . . .

Mike could wait—for he was waiting for the answer to his proposal, and that—— Cunliffe looked up, sullen and defiant.

"What can I do," he said bitterly, "but agree?"

Mike Hale took out his pocket-book, found Cunliffe's I O U and said briefly:

"Write me a fresh one for half the amount."

Cunliffe hesitated.

"When you've destroyed that," he said obstinately. "How do I know you won't trick me—keep both?"

For the first time, then, contempt flashed involuntarily into Mike's eyes. But he only shrugged and said, after a moment's pause:

"All right. I'll put the paper on the desk. Then, when you've signed the other, you can take this and destroy it yourself. Will that do?"

Something in his voice pricked Cunliffe vaguely. But it did not, apparently, succeed in shaming his distrust. For he waited until Mike had laid the paper on the desk before him and, having written and signed the fresh note, seized and tore the original with a rather ugly eagerness. . . .

So a journey was bartered. . . . *

Four days later Mike Hale stood on the Curleu's deck and saw the wide sweep of Weymouth Bay calm and pearl-coloured in the February twilight—and found life good.

As he had prophesied, so simply had the plan worked; the Hamiltons' invitation had at once been extended to the junior partner, and the regrets expressed at Cunliffe's avowed inability to come were in no way allowed to temper the welcome accorded to

his deputy.

It chanced that Francesca Hamilton, who had been visiting in Dorsetshire, joined the Curlew at Weymouth, instead of at the east coast port where the yacht had been laid up, and so knew nothing of the affair until that moment of her meeting with Mike. Thus it fell to Mike himself to give her that version of its circumstances that he and Cunliffe had agreed should be the portion of the world in general.

Francesca Hamilton, with her slim, erect poise, her oval wild-rose face set in a cloud of soft cendré hair, was surely not of the "world in general" at all. But she must perforce share its belief in the explanation of Mike's presence. So Mike told her, in his characteristic brief and grave fashion, and since Francesca had at that moment turned to glance at a brown-sailed fishing-boat slipping out into the dusk, she was not, perhaps, aware of the odd intensity with which he watched her face, as if he sought to learn the measure of the only welcome aboard the Curlew that mattered to him.

Francesca, turning, gave him one of her light-hearted and adorable smiles.

"Oh—well, since you're here we shall have to put up with you. Luckily, Timothy likes you."

Timothy, Francesca's Sealyham, came rushing up to endorse this statement with enthusiasm, relieving the moment of that tension of which Francesca, despite her careless gaiety, may have been aware.

After that first explanation Cunliffe's name

-" she shook her head, "it must have been was not mentioned between them. The a bad bargain." Curlew went south in calm and fair weather, For all his directness, he did not turn his and to Mike Hale, during those halcyon days, head to meet her glance. He said slowly: the price he had paid for their enjoyment "It had to be made. There was no other seemed a very paltry thing. Once, talking to Francesca, a memory came to prickthe memory of Cunliffe's words concerning And—now you regret it?" the girl's possible point of view should she know of the bargain. He had sat for some moments, leaning forward in his deck chair, grim and silent, and Francesca, watching him, put her hand on his sleeve with the frank imperiousness and sympathy of a rather charming small girl, and demanded the cause of this black mood of his that did not match the weather and the hour. He could have lied to hercould have put her off with a laughing evasion. But he said, with his own curt and cool directness: "I was thinking of a bargain." "Then it must have been a bad one," said Francesca promptly, "to make you look like that.

" No." She looked at him with serious and reflective grey eyes, though her mouth was ready to curve into laughter.

"I always believe you," she said. "But

She saw his hand clench on the arm of the cane chair.

" No!"

"Then it is a mystery—your bargain!"

To which Mike Hale made no reply.

The unqualified triumph of his plan should surely have satisfied him; involving as it did the fact that, however possessively

looked at him seriously, "now—I am not so sure."

He turned to her with a conscious effort, trying to see, not the charm



cesca, she herself at all events recognised no formal engagement. Yet, for all that for all Francesca's candid friendship—the echo of Cunliffe's bitter malice had power to sting.

"You know," said Francesca, with a little laugh, half puzzled, half whimsical, that sent a dull red into Mike's still averted face, "you know—I've always imagined you as rather a successful person."

"Have you?"

"Always — until now. Now —" she clasped slim hands around her knees and

expressiveness might disclose concerning her words. But he found, to his dismay, that such cool analysis was utterly beyond him . . . when Francesca looked like that.

He said, stiffly and harshly:

"Oh—success is generally variable, isn't it? I expect mine is no exception to the rule."

She shook her head.

"Oh. . . . But I think there are some men who just take their luck . . . always, without any effort. I was afraid you might be one of those."

" Afraid?"

The rose colour deepened in her face.

"They—they—you see, they don't need any sympathy," she told him, with a little unsteady laugh.

"Francesca!"

So in that moment Cunliffe was forgotten—forgotten as surely as all else save the facts of Francesca's nearness and dearness, that for which Mike Hale had bartered, justifying his action a thousandfold.

With ironical coincidence, it was the man with whom he had driven his bargain who, indirectly, shattered the spell of that moment. Footsteps sounded on the other side of the deck-awning; a second later the large, white-clad figure of Sir George ap-

peared.

"We've just had a wireless from the Derwent Castle," he said, sinking down, with much creaking, into the cane seat from which Mike Hale had risen that moment before. "And—amazin' thing—Cunliffe sent it! He's aboard her, sailed forty-eight hours after we did—of course we've been potterin' along—and he reckons they may overtake us before Madeira. If not, he'll join us there. Suppose he managed to get his business at home done in time, what?"

He glanced, rather naturally, for endorsement of his supposition at the junior partner of Cunliffe and Hale; and, having done so, his glance remained to become an involuntary stare of amazement. Mike's countenance, grim and white, justified the stare. For the second time in a brief half-hour events held in their grip the man who hitherto had always contrived their domination and control. To Mike Hale, then, Sir George's breezily imparted news held an overwhelming significance. Cunliffe the gambler, irresolute and weak, with whom, despising those very failings that had served his own advantage, Mike had driven his bargain, was revealing a new and unsuspected quality. Obviously, he had repented of his acquiescence, forced though it had been, and, reckless of the consequences, had caught the next Cape liner—because he had realised that the chance he had bartered was beyond barter.

Mike became aware that Sir George was looking at him curiously. Yet more acutely was he conscious of the presence of Francesca—Francesca, who, five minutes ago, had held for him the keys of heaven. . . . Francesca, because of whom Ronald Cunliffe had done this reckless, devil-may-care thing.

Vividly there rose up before him the memory of Cunliffe's face as he had seen it last across the office desk—the face of a beaten man upon whom he had had no mercy. He had felt contempt of Cunliffe then—contempt at the very fact of his agreement to the bargain.

And now Cunliffe had refuted his contempt

—dramatically.

In a few hours they would reach Madeira, and the *Derwent Castle* was due at dawn.

"So, after all, it'll be a dead heat," Sir George was saying. He rose from the chair, the fact having at length dawned on him that his arrival on the scene had interrupted a somewhat engrossing tête-à-tête.

"And the firm of Cunliffe and Hale will be united once more," said Francesca lightly—with no more intent than that of filling an

awkward pause.

Upon Sir George's departure she turned to

Mike, smiling into his sombre eyes.

"Still regretting that bargain?" she demanded mischievously. "Or is it that you know the senior partner will not approve of it?"

He might have laughed at the unconscious irony of her words. Instead, he said, very quietly:

"Francesca—it is Cunliffe who should have been here—all the time—not I."

She looked at him in puzzled surprise.

"But—of course. I thought—we understood that he could not go to Madeira after all—and that you came in his place. You told me yourself——"

"Yes. I came in his place—but not for the reason I gave you. Not because of of the business. Not because he could not come. Because I—bought his chance."

"Bought his chance!" She echoed his words in a very cold little voice. And Mike Hale made an odd gesture as if to sweep aside all subterfuge.

"Yes. I—forced him to sell it."

"I do not understand," said Francesca.

"No. At first I did not mean you to.
But now——" He broke off. "Listen!"
he commanded curtly.

So she stood very straight and still before him while he told her the truth—the plain story of his bargain with Cunliffe.... Only he omitted to relate the incident of Cunliffe's suspicion and distrust concerning the destroying of the I O U. After all, there was no need...

At the end of the story she asked him one question.

"Why have you told me?"

He answered her curtly.

"Because it was—only fair. Cunliffe's

thrown up everything for the chance of seeing you—don't you realise that? A man who can act like that must start square."

She accepted the theory in silence, looking away from him. He smiled mirthlessly at nothing in particular.

"So you see, it is not I who need your-

sympathy."
"No," said Francesca quietly and as if the answer were quite obvious. She remained standing at the rail, staring out at the sea, and sky as she had on that first evening in Weymouth Bay; and perhaps it occurred to her that the contrast between that moment and this did not owe its poignancy to the exchange of the pearl and mist tints of February in the Channel for the vivid blues and amethyst and rose of this sunset over southern waters.

For the space of a moment Mike Hale Then he turned and stood there beside her. went away.

As Sir George had prophesied, the arrival of the Derwent Castle and the steam yacht Curlew amounted to a dead heat. hours later Ronald Cunliffe came aboard the yacht, to learn to his no small chagrin that Francesca Hamilton had gone ashore with her brother and three others of the party -not, however, including Mike Hale.

So it came about that the scene was set for the second interview of the partners of

Cunliffe and Hale.

"Don't exactly look as if you'd been enjoyin' yourself, what?" was Cunliffe's opening remark, when their host, under the impression that they had business concerns to discuss, had left them together. Cunliffe looked at his junior partner sharply, and the jauntiness with which he spoke conveyed no hint of being forced or assumed. Indeed, at that moment Ronald Cunliffe, smiling and spruce, looked a very different man from the one who ten days ago had weakly cursed Mike from his office chair; and it was upon the lean brown countenance of the younger man that the strong sunlight revealed unwonted lines of strain—a fact which surprised Cunliffe to a sort of triumphant curiosity.

"Bit surprised, what?" he said with a laugh that rang rather unpleasantly. "Thought you'd got the upper hand an' meant to keep it. . . . Well! you didn't

reckon with-luck."

Mike looked at him. It was, of course, incredible that in the week ensuing between their bargain and the sailing of the Derwent

Castle Cunliffe should have contrived to win back his losses-

"Oh, it wasn't that," said Cunliffe. He laughed again, thrust his hand into his coat pocket and took out a pocket-book, from which he selected and unfolded a paper for Mike's inspection. It was a lawyer's letter, dated the very day of the Curlew's departure from Weymouth, informing Ronald Cunliffe of his inheritance of close on three-quarters of a million.

"South African uncle I'd forgotten I possessed," explained Cunliffe with a grin, as Mike returned the letter with conventional congratulations. True to his character, he read into Mike's manner envy and discomfiture; unaware of the irony of the situation of which Mike was thinking—the contrast between the real explanation of Cunliffe's presence and that conjectured one which had led him to tell Francesca the truth, at the cost of losing her friendship.

The last word jarred Mike as if he had spoken it aloud. He had not forgotten the silence with which Francesca had received his confession, or the way in which she had kept her face averted from his. Cunliffe, whatever his failings, had been right when he had spoken of Francesca's attitude towards the man who had sought to buy his chance with her. . . . Well, he had bought it, and then, for a point of honour, had thrown it away. And before him sat the man whom he had accredited with a splendid recklessness. . . .

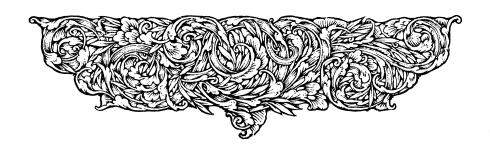
Mike smiled crookedly.

He went ashore later on, alone, in compliance with that business appointment that he had come near to forgetting. Cunliffe had stayed on the Curlew until the others' return, but much later in the day Mike caught sight of him on the quay with Francesca Hamilton. Yet when he himself returned to the yacht that evening—having been unable to refuse Sir George's insistence that he should maintain his headquarters there—he learnt that Cunliffe was at the hotel ashore.

It was Francesca herself who imparted the information, with her little gay laugh which yet did not ring quite as surely as usual. She had deliberately sought him out where he stood biting the stem of an empty pipe and watching the lights in the bay, and with a quaint assurance as to the subject of his reflections she said, without preface:

"You know-had your positions been reversed—had anyone wanted to—to buy your — chance, as you called it, I do not believe that you would have agreed."
"No," said Mike shortly. He gave her an odd look, but found her own eyes were directed to the level of his coat lapels. She nodded her head.

"I have thought that," she said, "ever since you told me—the truth. And, Mike—" quite suddenly she looked up, "Mike! since you don't want sympathy—or friendship—"



A HARVEST THANKSGIVING.

A WOMAN lifts her heart to-day,
Dear Lord, for all the good year's keeping;
She who has had no part at all
In earth's glad ploughing, sowing, reaping;
She has no golden harvest yield,
A house has been her only field.

A low-roofed dwelling-place, but where Come daily portions of Thy dower:
Sweet milk from fragrant meadow-lands;
From far-off wheatfields, clean, white flour;
Bright things from gardens, fruits from trees,
And honey from gold-banded bees.

Dear Lord, my little children's needs
Depend alone upon Thy keeping:
Without the sun and rain and soil—
Without man's constant sowing, reaping,
My little ones would wake and cry,
Would plead for food, would plead and die.

To-day a woman lifts her heart

For all these gifts of Thy bestowing:

For men who plough and sow and reap,

For laughing children, fed and growing,

Accept her loving gratitude

For soil and sun and rain and food.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

ENGLISH EARTH

By G. B. STERN AND GEOFFREY HOLDSWORTH

Authors of "The Happy Meddler."

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

HE man sitting on the stone wall of the terrace, the child, and the grave king in dark marble astride of his dark marble charger, were the only three beings to be seen, that sunset, in the deserted gardens of the Royal Palace of Budapest.

It was only after Carew had for some time been absently watching the small Hungarian boy play round the statue of Arpad that he somehow woke to the certain conclusion that it was a small English boy. "If this were twenty-five years ago," reflected Richard Spurnville Carew, wallowing in picturesque regrets, "between me and the Danube would pass a constant procession of officers in green or azure blue uniforms, with short, furred cloaks, each with a lovely lady leaning on his arm; and the whole scene so incredibly like Act II of a Viennese musical comedy, that when I stepped forward and sang quite simply heroically, 'The Archduke has gone this way!' so as to give him time to escape the other way, nobody would doubt but that I was George Graves, except those who thought I was Joseph Coyne. And at once the Blue Bayswater Orchestra would strike up-for it would be too cheap and commonplace to have a Hungarian band in Hungary—and I would waltz with the Empress, very beautifully and with a low, reckless laugh. And the great ballroom would be a-gleam and a-glitter and a-swing with bare shoulders and clanking swords and crystal candelabra—if this were twenty-five years ago!"

Carew was rattling nonsense to himself very fast indeed, to combat the slow mists of depression that were settling on his soul ever since, late that afternoon, he had crossed Elizabeth's Bridge from new Pest to old Buda, to explore the steep, silent little streets: cobbled lanes that lurched

drunkenly uphill between silent little houses with coloured tiles and bulging windows, that all led to the Moorish Cathedral of St. Matthias, that grotesque grimace of gipsy architecture—church that would never again be used for coronation of kings of Hungary. It was a dead city on this bank of the Danube. Dead, splendid buildings, with courtyards that echoed Carew's steps too hollowly where were no other steps to divert attention from his own—these must have been for the king's courtiers, and the king's ministers, and the king's generals. Did nobody live in Buda, or walk along the chestnut alleys beside the river, now? The vacant sentry-boxes, the public buildings with their formal empty courtyards and dry fountains, gave an impression as though a hand had been laid upon their tick, the mainspring broken, when Royalty went out of the Royal Palace.

Carew, a flamboyant sentimentalist, and well aware of his failing, dared not go into the palace itself, and be shown by a guide round the vacant rooms under the round green copper domes that looked so incredibly Eastern when they glittered in the slanting rays of the sun. He wandered, instead, into the gardens and sat down near the statue of Arpad on horseback, Arpad the first conqueror of Hungary, and watched the river mists, and watched his own depression, and decided to return at once to Pest and at once to England; and did not do either, but sat there, miserably dwelling on the undoubted fact that where gallant officers had walked, with fur on their cloaks and each with a lovely lady on his arm, remained now only empty terraces and empty lawns rimmed by flower-beds ironically gay, and one tall Englishman meditating on a stone wall, and, near by, one small boy playing round the statue of Arpad.

And Carew began to watch him more intently, this living atom who was, after all, so much more interesting than images of dead pageantry. The boy puzzled him. How be so sure he was English, dressed in that local style of bright striped blouse and linen knickers? It was the way he played. Unconscious of being observed, he had thrown himself ardently into some drama of a messenger bringing news to Arpadbad news-seize the king's rein and run for your life-nay, for his life-beside the galloping steed. . . . Too late. . . . Overtaken. . . . Well, out with your sword, then, and defend his life with your own. But a revolver, instead, was the imaginary weapon that the boy drew from his hippocket. There was a sort of sturdy restraint about his gestures, the quality of his low growling defiance at the imaginary enemy, lack of hysteria in the entire representation of danger and death-and then "Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"Bound to be partly English, at any rate." Carew drew out his pipe and lit it. He was feeling happier now. He liked children.

But was this a new game that the small boy was playing? He had tired of escape and battle, obviously: his gestures flagged; his thin, determined little face took on a look of tragedy, of want, that was not the robust, mimic tragedy of five minutes ago. The sun had set now, and the huddled town behind them had dropped its illusion of living warmth. The boy seemed to hesitate, looked up that way once or twice as though speculating whether he should return home, whether there were any human welcome at home to make returning worth his while. Then, his lips tightly pressed together, his dark, wide-set eyes oddly frightened, he climbed on to the statue, pulled himself erect on his feet beside Arpad, stood there an instant, swaying.

Carew started forward, alarmed. He recognised that look now, though last time he had seen it was not on a child's face. . . . That woman, just before she jumped off Waterloo Bridge. . . . But the little boy had jumped already, by the time Carew reached him.

It was not very far to the ground. He lay quite still, clasping his leg as though it hurt him. But his face was tranquil, now; a quaint sparkle of mischief, even, lurked in it, as though he had achieved a desired and desirable end. "Hullo!" he exclaimed. "I say, I've twisted my leg. Oh!" And,

as Carew tried to lift him, he began to cry

quite naturally.

"All right—steady!" Carew quickly improvised a splint, and then, with great gentleness, lifted him again. "I'm going to carry you home, sonny. Where do you live!"

"Up there—not far—I'll show you." He pointed towards old Buda. "My name is Ladislas Benruddock; he calls me Laddie."

" He ? "

"My father!" And the boy might equally have said "My hero!" for the pride and love that throbbed, unconcealed, in his voice.

Ladislas Benruddock? It sounded wholly foreign at first to Carew's ear. Several kings of Hungary had been called Ladislas. But Benruddock? Why, yes, surely a common name in Cornwall; there had been old José Benruddock, down at Coverack.

"Here!" Laddie pointed to a tiny café with a few tables on the pavement outside. "We live upstairs." The café was empty, save for its proprietor, an enormous gentleman who appeared to be asleep, undisturbed by any prospect of imminent trade. "He'll be sitting at the window," remarked Laddie further, weary but contented; his leg was paining him.

Carew, whose nature was to be wildly inquisitive over the secret life, the life behind the surface, of all his fellow-humans, wondered if he were soon to learn why a young Englishman with the Cornish name of Benruddock should so certainly be sitting at a window looking down on to a narrow street in old Buda, where nothing ever happened to look at? And why his son should be called Ladislas, after the kings of Hungary? And why this same little son should have—

" Laddie!"

"I've hurt my leg, jumping!" announced the sufferer. "This man carried me home. He's English."

Garth Benruddock was a mystery, too. His hand-clasp was without any warmth or grip to it. His eyes surveyed Carew politely, but without interest. He refrained from questioning the stranger who had carried in his son, but refrained from lack of fellowship, not from courtesy. He seemed, indeed, to have no human contacts at all—at any rate, to have severed any that he might ever have had. No, "severed" is too sharp-cut a word—to have let them slip listlessly from his heart. His conversation

was intelligent enough, but without the pull in it, the stir and shift of feeling when the pulse urges it from behind. He neither hated nor loved, this dead young Englishman who sat nearly all day in a chair by a low window bulging over a dead street in old Buda, as though there were nothing else for him to do. He was encased in ice. Again and again Carew struck at the invisible encasement, hoping to hew through to some answering quickness or vitalityeven anger, if need be. It was no good. Only with Laddie did Benruddock show any ordinary human tenderness, and that was because the boy had hurt his leg and needed The leg began to mend after three or four days, and, in consequence, protective instinct ebbed to indifference again.

Carew came often that week to see Laddie. He liked him. And, besides, there was something he wanted to understand. Suddenly it occurred to him that it was hardly fair to play a watching game with a child; you must meet him on level ground; ask him a straightforward question, and trust to luck that he will not turn his back on you.

"When you fell off the horse's back,

Laddie——"

"I didn't "—quickly and proudly. Well, and it would be an idiot piece of bungling for a nimble-footed nine-year-old. "I didn't."

"Jumped off?"

" Yes."

It had to be said now: "On purpose—to hurt yourself?"

Laddie nodded. His dark eyes were a-glitter with tears that had not been there

a moment ago.

Carew waited. He had no wish unduly to pry, to go rummaging where Laddie kept his sorrows and his treasures, but surely, surely here he could do something; it was absurd to allow any man to live on like Benruddock, for fear of being indelicate in interference. Why, a child was unhappy! The Meddler was hotly angry with this piece of mechanism that walked and spoke, ate and drank and slept, and did no more, and nevertheless could own for son a boy ardent and flushed and responsive like Laddie.

"He doesn't take any notice of me when I'm all right," said Laddie at last, in a voice very carefully controlled. "And when it goes on too long like that, I—I want him to awfully." And Carew could glimpse, as through a swiftly-opened casement, the

loneliness, the pent-up nervous strain for the boy, contained in the phrase "like that." "He was quite different when I had fever twice, and once when I'd been fighting and they'd rolled me over, though they were three, but one of them was a girl, but she was older than I was, so it almost counts as a boy."

"Quite," his companion assented gravely.

"He's different, then," Laddie finished, and shrugged his shoulders with an adult resignation which somehow expressed his forlorn state more poignantly than any wail of complaint. "One can't be always hurting one's leg!" Which was so manifestly true that Carew found no adequate reply.

He invited Benruddock to an evening's fellowship across the river in Pest, where the cabarets and coffee-houses and hotels and the tree-shaded promenade beside the Danube were all flowing with processions of laughing men and women of all nationalities, some prosperous and many indigent, but perhaps the most vital crowd to be

found in any capital of Europe.

At the Café Melchior, the Tzigane band, lean, swarthy men in black coats, improvised gloriously until their violin music surged over the gilt walls and swelled from floor to ceiling; till the small space was so packed with ecstasy that it became unbearable. And then the violins were silent, and the violin leader looked about him to see who was offering him champagne. Americans usually did. Ah yes, there was a rich-looking party beckoning him! It was good "local colour" to have stood champagne to a Hungarian gipsy fiddler in a café at Budapest. "Sure, he's like the Archangel Gabriel!" whispered one awed American girl to her sister. Benruddock just faintly smiled at the "Archangel" as he sauntered past their corner table towards his reward.

"My brother-in-law," he explained to Carew.

"Your wife was a Tzigane, then?" He was determined to ask any question that arose in his mind, rather than repress it to spare his companion pain. Pain was better than numbness, and fury than apathy. It might, reflected Carew, in the spirit of sheer self-sacrifice, even work out ultimately as a stimulating thing for Garth Benruddock to be on trial for the knifing of one Richard Spurnville Carew.

"Yes. One of the loveliest in Hungary. She died when Laddie was a year old." So wooden was his speech that he might have

been talking of the death of his aunt's third White Orpington—a real beauty!

"How did you meet her?"

"We danced together at a wedding. Not far from here; a village out on the plains. I came mooching down through Central Europe directly after the War was over."

"But you've been home since?"
"Back to England, you mean? No."

"That's incredible!" exclaimed Carew.

" Why ? "

The Happy Meddler fortified himself with golden Tokay. Next, he delivered himself of an exceedingly amusing burlesque, in terms of romantic rhapsody, on "home." And then he said, slowly and deliberately: "The conventions between two Englishmen dictate that I must not talk to you of things like home or love of country, or death or white-haired mothers, without an artificial pretence that these are minor matters, to be brushed aside hurriedly or else referred to as though they were deucedly funny. I meant every word I said just now."

"What of it?" queried Benruddock. "I don't mind. Getting rather slow here, don't you think? Shall we push on to the Tzimbali?"

They pushed on to the Café Tzimbali, where brilliant cardboard parrots swung from perches, uttering benisons on the motley dancers swirling in the cramped space between the tables. Under cover of the full-blooded yells of a joyous nigger orchestra, Garth Benruddock began to talk. In dry, passionless sentences he talked of the War, of the six months spent, on and off, in crouching between a line and a line of mud; of the monotonous two and a half years in a German prison camp, where they were not even cruel to him.

"What had you got to think about?" interrupted Carew. "After all, everything depends on that, in these infernal intervals of day and night dullness. What were you before the War? What was going on in England? Who wrote to you?"

"My sister. Yes, Kate wrote to me regularly." And he repeated the word "regularly" as though it were a form of reproach. "She wrote to me about the farm. My father had been what you would call a 'gentleman farmer' down in Cornwall, and I was the second son, so that I didn't inherit. To make up for it, when he died he left me more than enough to buy a small place of my own, in another part of the country. Only about ninety acres. I was

very keen about it." And oh, the dreary lack of keenness, of any boyishness whatsoever, in his utterance! Yet, after all, he was not much over thirty, and, strangely, looked a good deal less. "I chose Kate, out of all my sisters, to come and help me run it. We were good pals, Kate and I, and she liked being chosen. When we'd been at it less than a year, I had to go. Kate promised to run the farm for me as though I were there. I hated leaving it, just to go and lie about wasting time, doing nothing, when I might have been ploughing, sowing grain, helping the ewes in the lambing season. Fighting would have been different, but I had bad luck, and didn't get in the thick of it at all until one minor scrimmage, when I was stunned by a shell bursting near me, and then taken prisoner. We never failed to get our letters where I was shut up. They were decent about that. The farm seemed to be doing well. According to Kate, it was doing better than anyone else's. Never any disease among the crops, and the weather like an obedient servant. Her letters were full of how well it was doing, and what good prices everything fetched, and how I wasn't to worry a bit, nor fret at things going wrong without me there, because nothing went wrong. Nothing at all. They were long letters. It was decent of Kate. She told me every detail, of just what was coming up, and how it looked, and what people were saying about Benruddock, envying us our luck-

The young Englishman, who had drifted down to Budapest, and there had squandered his dreaming life away, broke off at the burst of noisy applause which welcomed the appearance of the next dancer on the cabaret programme-Carla Fritz, a thin little genius with an impudent face, crowned with an enormous Napoleon hat. Her green Napoleon coat was reduced to absurdity by fur collar and cuffs of extravagant size. Her red silk tights were a further irrelevancy, and her harlequin shoes; and her dance was like a series of alluring capers in which she strutted like a pasha, drilled like a soldier; she was graceful as a sylph, as an autumn leaf. embodied, indeed, Cosmopolis that was neither East nor West, neither European nor Oriental, but just gay. "Ĉarla Fritz!" The lookers-on at the Tzimbali shouted with laughter and shouted her name. The parrots dangled in a concerned sort of way from their perches. Incredibly

agile waiters twinkled to and fro with tall glasses of beer, and cheese that was served with little heaps of paprika, brilliant vermilion patches, round the rim of the plate. The leader of the nigger orchestra on the platform frenziedly threw his drumsticks into the air, and threw back his head so that a thousand high lights flashed on to the responsive shine of his complexion. A comic opera figure in the uniform of the Budapest police strode in, whispered a mysterious, sinister command to the manager, strode all round the room twice, strewing uneasiness, and then out again, having pulled Carla Fritz appreciatively by the ear.

And at the table in the corner, an Englishman talked about his farm. And he talked, not wildly, but rather as one who can only just remember that he had felt wildly, long

"They—bored me, those letters of Kate. She wrote such long letters, and always the same, and took it for granted that I cared as much as I had when I left England. didn't think of it, that war and imprisonment might alter a man. That shell, too, bursting so near—the one that threw me over—they said it had done no harm, but I don't know. I was restless, and sleeping badly. The farm bored me, I tell you! And I had to keep it from Kate that I was bored. And when I went back to it, when the War was over, I should have to pretend and pretend. . . . I dreaded going back."

"And you didn't."

"No. What did it matter, after all? It was prospering without me. Kate had said that she could run it. Well, she could carry on with running it. She's as good a farmer as I, perhaps better. And, anyway, I only meant not to go back at once—not quite at once. When I was released, I can remember how I longed for this sort of He indicated the Tzimbali's very un-Saxon glitter of exuberant high spirits. "And, in another way, I wanted peace, too, the kind I've got over the river—that quiet room and that quiet street. No obligation to act the most difficult part in the world, to act the self that you were once, and that somebody — your sister — still trustfully thinks you are. I was released—and I drifted out here—and married Marishka. We were very happy for a year. I don't know what Kate thought when I didn't turn up. She may think I'm dead."

"You never wrote?"

Carla Fritz's turn was over, and her attentive audience at the tables were now able to froth over on to the dancing-floor, and spill their limbs in a variety of hilarious fox-trots. Carla herself, strolling round behind the oval of tables, took a whimsical fancy to the lean face of Richard Spurnville Carew, and invited him to dance with her. She found him a nimble, albeit an absentminded partner, for he paid her the same compliment in seven different languages, and related at least half a dozen contradictory fantasies relating to himself and his business in Budapest. And all the while his brain was working furiously, and his eyes were dreamy, for he had heard the Call.

The Call, to Dick Carew, meant that some affair, which was not his business at all, was very drastically wrong and would have to be put right. The condition of Benruddock presented itself to him as quite the most urgent problem that had as yet come his way. Here was a man who was dead and yet not dead; content and yet not happy; with no work to do, and not even the activity to resent inaction. Here was a brother who had failed a loyal sister, and had little love for a son who adored Here was a life being squandered, and a soul frozen alive.

And all that this man said in response to expostulation was a weary: "What does it matter?"

The queer part of it was, reflected Carew, that you did not blame him. There had been a strong reaction of that queer, intangible sort for which the War had been so often responsible. Cramped to inaction for over two years in an enemy prison camp, he had not responded, normally and brightly. by a burst of energy the instant he had been set free; by bounding back to work on his fields again. Something had-gone sick, and like a dog that nibbles the grass, which his instincts tell him he needs for his ultimate cure, he went questing down into Central Europe, down the Danube. Romance? Ah, well, the Tzimbali at Budapest-as good as any other form of it, if that was what he felt he wanted.

And then another hard shock when Marishka died. And this time the poor devil did not care to rally. He stayed where he was. . . . What does it matter?

The sister, too, Kate, she had been, in her tenderness, the worst of all fools, the kind that abounded during the War: she had sent him only the good news. Oh, of

[&]quot;No. What does it matter?"

course her motives had been conspicuously which all went sleekly without a blemish or unselfish, heroic even. "Garth mustn't be accident for twenty-four hours of each day upset or worried by my letters; it's bad and night?"... Among the jostled enough for him out there. I must send him only pleasant thoughts." And so she went doggedly on, overstressing prosperity, suppressing the undoubted fact that this morning the old cow broke her leg, and that it

"A rusty rail had been laid across the gap. Garth leant his arms on it and gazed at his home and property.

Laddie, close up to him, gazed too."

hadn't rained for forty days. "Oh, fool, Kate! Where was the appeal of a farm in

couples on the dancing-floor, Carew saw, in a hollow scooped out for his momentary

vision, a woman sitting solitary at a lamp-lit table in a farm-house kitchen, adding up accounts, then impatiently thrusting them aside, bitter with the unending fruitlessness "Dance with me again," demanded Carla Fritz in German,



of toil and toil for the sake of a brother who had not even cared enough to come back. A very lonely woman, Kate Benruddock. Well, she had had to pay, was doubtless paying still, for her well-meant blunder.

... The vision was quenched, the music stopped; and then, in response to frantic clappings and stamping of feet, the nigger lifted his drumsticks, and the band crashed into the refrain again: "I—love my—Chili bom-bom. . . "

ing him. He was sehr fesch—that expressive Viennese that translated into a blend of chic and "good form."

——"Operate at once!" More than ever before in his vagabond career, the Happy Meddler felt now, towards Benruddock, all the personal responsibility, the urgency of a surgeon suddenly summoned to a bad case which has been neglected too long. What could he do to rouse the patient from stupor, to remove the numbing obstruc-

tion, whatever it was? A man without roots and without occupation, should be killed, or else, if still possible, skilfully goaded to life again, not just be suffered to remain as he was, rotting away the warm vitality of all that came in contact with him-Laddie, for instance.

Laddie! The Meddler had got his clue! He need not rack his inventive powers any further. It sprang, in answer to perplexity, straight from recollection of Laddie's confession that day: "He doesn't take any notice of me when I'm all right. . . . He was quite different when I had fever twice, and once when I'd been fighting."

To an astute psychologist—and Carew was arrogant about his divination of the hearts and minds of others—one hint was enough. When he had handed over his gamine partner to a whole row of clamorous rivals, and walked gently across to the table in the corner, Carew knew exactly what experiment he meant to try on the unconscious Garth Benruddock.

It did not take five minutes to shift their talk back again to the subject of farms. Then Carew remarked that he rather wondered at the son of a Somerset farmer not remaining on Somerset soil, where it was more familiar.

"Cornwall, not Somerset, I said," was Garth's uninterested correction. "And I

only moved from South to North."

"Cornwall? Then why did I imagine-Now, I know Cornwall well. I've stayed there with friends. Just whereabouts is your farm ? "

"The north coast, but a short way inland, of course. Place called St. Bennett, not far from Padstow. Why, what is it?" For his companion was staring at him with that sort of-of dawning look.

"There?" he muttered. And: "Benruddock . . . Of course, I remember now-"

"Remember what?"—sharply.

And Carew replied in confusion: "No-Yes, I have stayed in that part, but—all farms look alike to a townsman, you know. Don't they?" It was obvious that he was nervous, and wanted to change the subject. He began to speak of Carla Fritz.

Garth interrupted with: "You do know the farm. What is it you're not telling me?"

And then Carew, to put it colloquially, fairly let him have it. And he could be amazingly eloquent when he chose; when, as now, he was fighting for what amounted to as much as a man's very reason and a small boy's happiness.

It was a ruined farm. It was standing empty—had been untenanted for over a year. The last man in there had been a fellow who had fallen sick and had to move down to Scilly; and before that had been an Irish family, shiftless, muddled, lazy. They'd find it a job to get a tenant now, in the state it was in: fields gone fallow, and tall with weeds, trampled over by invading cattle; broken gates; rust and mildew on the farm implements, out of date now, in many cases; rotting fences; sheds and outhouses tumbling down for want of repairs in time after heavy weather; tiles gone from the roof of the farm-house itself, and a crop of old tin cans in the front

"When did Kate—die?" asked Kate's brother in a low voice. But he was listening, right enough, to the wry news of his property; his old apathy had dropped away from him

like a shed cloak.

"Die? She's enjoying herself in London. Do you blame her—after you had ratted? How long did you suppose your sister would sit there waiting, and for your sake running for all she was worth a concern that had been your joint affair, so that you should find nothing changed when you came back? You talked of 'reaction'? Women suffer from it, too, sometimes. Even an incredibly loyal, hard-working—idiot of a sister is human sometimes. When there was no word, no sign from you, nor sight of you, after all her hard years, then she had a 'reaction,' too. The farm suddenly sickened her, and life on the farm and work on the farm. She just didn't care what became of it; let it to the first tenant who offered, good or bad. She was aching for pleasure then, greedy for her share of all that London had hoarded of pleasure during the War years. Women fly to contrast not less than She was free now of responsibility. Waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting again, and then one smiting disappointment—and free. I hope," added Carew viciously, for he had so projected himself into the emotional part of Kate Benruddock that he genuinely, for the moment, believed in her behaviour, "and I hope that she's having a thundering good time!"

There was no question any more of Garth being a frozen man. "She had no right to leave the farm like that!" he cried angrily.

You have no right to resent it, surely?" "Babbling her wrongs to the whole neighbourhood-

"She babbled to no one." Those at the tables near by were grinning, wondering what the two Englishmen were having a row about; Englishmen so rarely became excited in public. "I simply heard that the farm belonged to a brother and sister, and had once been a paying concern. he hadn't come back from the War-killed, probably—and that she had found it too much for her, single-handed, and had let it and gone to London. The rest I put together, easily enough, from what you told me. Your fields are a disgrace—scroil and bindweed all over them, and thistles, too, seedy stuff that blows about, so that the other farmers round there don't like it; they call it 'dirty land.'"

This was the climax—and enough! Carew, secretly rejoicing, saw that he need add no The owner of Benruddock had flushed dark red and his hand had clenched on the edge of the table. "'Dirty land!" he repeated huskily, and, after a few more moments' brooding, rose and pushed back his chair. His property, his land, once cherished, toiled over and made fertile by him, now a byword in the neighbourhood, a menace to other farms, jeered at, but deplored as a scandal. "Dirty land!" His? He walked out of the Tzimbali, his head bent. The sting of shame was unendurable. Thank Heaven, however, there was still time to show them! farm needed him as much as that-

"I'm starting for England to-morrow with Laddie," he flung over his shoulder at Carew, who had paid and followed him out.

The Meddler smiled happily into the darkness.

They did not start on the following morning for England, because of the need for procuring passports and the like formalities. But the interim gave time for Laddie's leg to heal completely—a wildly excited Laddie with two wildly excited legs. And four days later, they did indeed start for England, Carew with them, partly because he might as well return to England as go on anywhere else, and partly because of the beginning of uneasiness.

They went by boat as far as Vienna. Benruddock, a queerly transformed being, eager and impatient, paced the deck with Carew, and talked amorously, and with incessant ambition, of his farm and what he meant to do there; how the reported damage could be most quickly retrieved; what original ideas, carried into effect,

would yield the best results; planting sugar-beet, for instance, on a large scale, as they did in Hungary. Why not? What did Carew think of it? As, anyway, the meadows had gone to waste, it would not be like creating a vast disturbance of any existing state of things.

"I've got a capital of a few hundreds that I'm prepared to sink in it. Oh, not much, but Laddie and I have been able to live on it up till now." But, except for this one reference, he altogether ignored his lethargic past, his drowsy existence in Budapest, as though a different man, who did not concern him, had been wizarded fast into a spell and left there, still dreaming.

His attitude to Laddie, too, had altered. His son now seemed woven in with his land. Both belonged to him; his farm would have to be hauled into order for his son's inheritance. And both—certainly his conscience was broad awake—both had been sufferers from his neglect. He unrolled for Laddie's benefit picture after picture of intimate daily life on an English farm, and the boy listened entranced—

Take of English earth as much
As either hand will rightly clutch. . . .

Thus the Happy Meddler was at first very well pleased with the results of his interference. Laddie's face alone glorious repayment. And nothing was so gratifying to Carew as when his psychological deductions, like a successful conjuring trick, brought the rabbit out of the top-hat. He had lied, freely and with fine dramatic about the abandoned state of the Farm-which, needless to say, lay in a part of Cornwall which he had never even visited within fifty miles!-along the same principles that would make you reasonably sure of animating a sluggish mother by such a casual untruth as that her child is sitting on the railway lines at the level crossing, and the down express is almost due. Laddie's confession had subtly pointed out to him that he could rely on awakening Garth's paternal instincts for any of his property that might happen to be down on its luck, shabby and despised. His narration of boredom at the effect of Kate's letters relating only to the smugness, sleekness, and jaunty independence of Benruddock's, corroborated this idea. And it was the right idea. Here they were, on their way back to England.

But on the second day of the journey, as they drew nearer to the lie and its inevitable exposure, Carew began to grow uneasy. By the fourth day he was positively terrified, for their fourth day, after leaving Budapest, saw them in the train between Waterloo and Padstow. They had travelled through without a break.

Benruddock a trifle was astonished when his companion suggested accompanying them as far as Cornwall, as far as St. Bennett. But Carew, though he would rather have fled to the furthest ends of Scotland than be present at the moment when Garth should first stare at the farm's undoubted orderliness and prosperity, yet was no shirker. And he deemed it his job to be present, to explain, and to cope with the consequences. What he hoped for most desperately, was a reconciliation between Kate and Garth, between brother and sister, once his despotic agency had brought them face to face. And then a softened Garth might forgive the farm for not being in a state of deplorable ruin, and might forgive Carew for his inspired warbling of a song without facts. And if not-oh, well, hang it, there might be the dickens of a row, but nothing could be worse, for Laddie nor for Garth himself, than that stuffy little quiet room in old Buda. Once the sap begins to rise in the tree, the tree cannot wither and rot into dry wood.

Garth had told the driver of the small car they had hired at Padstow, to set them

to the station for their luggage.

"You remember this old cross?"—to the Meddler, who answered hastily:

down at the moor cross-roads, and to return

"Yes—oh yes! Well, that's to say—yes!"

"We can walk from here. Only about half a mile along the lane. And there used to be a gap which gives us a good view of the house and several of the fields round it." And he added, with a would-be reckless laugh: "I might as well get my first shock and punishment over at once." And again and for the thousandth time he thought: "'Dirty land'? I'll show'em!"

"Yes," agreed Richard Spurnville Carew woodenly. Neat farm buildings, probably in excellent repair, fields of waving grain, more fields of cattle, contentedly browsing; trimmed hedges and well-drained ditches—no doubt but that it would be a shock!

"Here's the gap!" announced the exile suddenly, in a queer throaty voice. And Laddie pranced exultantly on the white, dusty road between the tall banks A rusty rail had been laid across the gap. Garth leant his arms on it and gazed at his home and property. Laddie, close up to him, gazed too; so did Carew. . . .

"M'yes," muttered the man who had gone away, at last, after a profound silence. "Rather worse, even, than I thought. But we'll get it right in time. Come along, Lad!" Forgetting Carew, they moved together towards the forlorn-looking grey stone building with its mildewed "To Let" board creaking at the broken-down front

The Happy Meddler, with the dazed sense of one who has been saved by the unforeseen working of a miracle, lurched along the lane towards a cluster of houses and shops which he guessed to be St. Bennett. The old woman at the post office, fortunately of the genial and not the austere type, told him that she had been there for three-andtwenty years. Told him that she well remembered Miss Kate up tu Benruddock's, Miss Kate had carried on fine an' done well by the farm all through the War, but she did lose heart when at the end of it her brother 'e didn't never come back, though none o' them here-along had rightly heard that he was dead, neither. All in a rush like, t' dear maid had gone off tu London, ess, to live there, an' had sent word afterwards—it might be two years or three—that she was married, so she was, tu a rich man in t' City.

As fur farm, it had been let first tu a man as didn't rightly unnerstand farming, an' then tu a man as took sick an' died, an' then tu one as was too venturesome, my dear heart, yes! But for t' last eighteen months there it had stood empty, and rotting away, and the good land wasted, so that it wur a shame to see. And Farmer Trevorrick, up tu St. Kitts, said it was dirty land, an' that the law could——

"Thank you," said the Happy Meddler rather breathlessly, and walked rapidly away.

Yes, he was wonderful! He was even more wonderful than he had hitherto imagined himself. Not only did he get his psychology unerringly right, but he simply could not get it wrong, even when he thought he was just inventing, even with somebody whom he had neither seen nor known, like Kate Benruddock. He, Richard Spurnville Carew, stood still on the strip of green common, unable to go on, paralysed for sheer wonder at himself.



'He bent towards her and took her hand and drew it down from her face. 'W-why aren't you helping f-father with the accounts?' she sobbed."

INSTITUTIONAL ANN

By R. HOWARD SPRING

ILLUSTRATED BY E. WELCH RIDOUT

HIRTY-FIVE, Ann Bennison reflected, was a rotten age to be if you were unmarried. Her sister Kate, it is true, was thirty-nine; but then Kate was married. Her sister Jane, like herself, was unmarried; but then Jane was only thirty. It was that irritating combination of being thirty-five and being unmarried that made Ann so thoughtful as she stood at the French window and watched the spring sunlight on the cherry blossom in the garden. There was one dreadful moment in her meditation when she remembered the saying that the years of man's life are three-score years and ten. Half the allotted span! Good gracious! Before the cherry blossom had

whitened the lawn Ann would be over the peak and following her shadow downhill; for, though she was not prepared to admit the awful truth, it was a fact that Ann was thirty-five years plus three hundred and sixty days.

It was not that she didn't want to marry. It was not that she didn't know whom she wanted to marry. She was quite clear in her mind that she wanted to marry Robin Elder.

Robin Elder sat on a stool at the end of the garden. An easel was before him, and he was engaged in putting the cherry trees upon his canvas. He was smoking a pipe as he worked. His hat was off, and his tight-curled fair hair, his tanned face, blue eyes, boyish mouth, made him, Ann thought, most desirable-looking. He didn't look his age. He was thirty. So was Jane who stood behind him. And Ann was thirty-five. A rotten age! Poor Ann!

"Old Ann." For how long had she been that? It seemed impossible to remember a time when she wasn't "old Ann "-so wellbeloved, so indispensable; but, still, old Even her senior, Kate, had fallen into the family habit. If anything went wrong, "We'd better see old Ann about it," was the first thing to be said. And the confidence was rarely misplaced. It had begun in doll days in the nursery; it had lasted through that momentous time when Kate came into her sister's bed one night, and with her arms about old Ann's neck had talked to her about Tony Sinclair, and old Ann had approved him and given her blessing; it had lasted right up to date, when everybody in the vicarage was looking to old Ann to make Robin Elder's visit a success. You could hardly expect the Rev. Robert Bennison to do it. It was only last Sunday that he had posted his sermon and tried to preach from a letter which he produced from his pocket in the pulpit; he was that kind of man. For a long time there had been no Mrs. Bennison to look after jobs of this sort; and Jane was too busy helping Robin to enjoy himself to be of much use in seeing to the mere domestic details of his bed and board. So to old Ann. once more, all looked for the successful oiling of domestic wheels and hinges.

She realised her position quite clearly as she stood at the window. She realised that she was highly regarded and that everybody would be shocked at the thought that injustice was being done her. But she realised, too, that she was an institution, and that if anything happened to alter her status there would be as much consternation as if the Bank of England suddenly began to do unaccustomed tricks. Institutions are not expected to vary; they are just expected to function—normally, calmly, unchangeably.

Now something in the spring morning, some enchanting breath blowing through that quiet vicarage garden of St. Arbuthnotin-Roseland, made her profoundly dissatisfied with being an institution, with being respected by everybody in general and loved by nobody in particular. The daffodils that trembled in the grass under the cherry trees were like little flames; and Ann felt that she would rather be a little flame burning

brightly for a brief season and then passing away for ever than an institution that grew steadily more and more venerable and respected and sterile and austere.

It was very disturbing. Such ideas had never worried her before Robin Elder came. She was turning from the window when Jane's voice called. "Oh, Ann, Ann! Come and give us a hand in with the things."

Ann went in her grave, almost matronly, way, on to the lawn where Robin and Jane were assembling cushions and easels, palettes and stools.

"Thanks, Ann, thanks so much," Jane said, when, in the house, Ann deposited an armful of cushions, a couple of stools and sundry other impedimenta on the floor. Jane carefully put down the canvas, her sole burden.

"Ann, Ann!"

It was the Rev. Robert Bennison's voice calling from his study. Ann found him, watch in hand, at his table.

"We're rather late with lunch, dear, aren't we? I'm afraid Jenny's all behind. D'you mind giving her a hand? You know, Robin and Jane have some scheme for going up the river this afternoon. They'll want to go as soon as possible because the evenings fall pretty quickly still. And we want them to have as much time as they can manage—eh, Ann?"

And if such a thing were believable, Ann would have sworn that her reverend father nearly achieved a knowing wink. She hurried from the room to help Jenny in the kitchen, and on the stairs ran into her brother John.

"Hallo, Ann! Seen my pipe?"

"Yes, John. It's on the dining-room mantelpiece. I found it in the hammock."

Finding and replacing lost things and mending broken ones were also part of the functions belonging to the well-established institution that was Ann.

Ann carried the cushions down to the boat after lunch, and saw Robin and Jane embark. She pushed them out with the boathook. With his sleeves rolled back, Robin hauled strongly on the oars. Ann watched the play of his muscles as the boat moved towards the spot where the harbour narrowed down to the tidal river that wandered away among the hills. She watched his lithe body bending backwards and forwards with the swing of his strokes till the river took him out of her sight.

She returned slowly up the hill to the

vicarage. John was fiddling with his motorbike in front of the house.

"Give us a push off, Ann. I'm running over to Truro.

Ann gave John a push off, and he honked and exploded away into the quiet afternoon. Then the sound of him ceased, and there was nothing to be heard save the steady stertoration of the Rev. Robert Bennison, taking his afternoon nap on the drawingroom sofa.

Ann sat on a seat on the lawn, and looked over the blue harbour, pondering. She had helped them both away, and now she was left alone with the old sleeping man. It seemed to be her fate to be always giving folk a push off-shoving out the boat, pushing off the bike—and then finding herself left behind.

She hadn't minded till now. But the idea that she would be left behind once more when Robin Elder went to Nigeria filled her with dread. Robin and John had met in the Army. Robin had often come to spend a flying week-end with John, and always on those occasions Ann had felt an access of calm pleasure in performing her usual task of keeping everything running smoothly. And now Robin's firm was sending him to Nigeria, and he was making a prolonged visit, which might easily be a farewell. Ann's calm pleasure was gone. She realised that the thing which no one seemed to think could come to her had come. She watched him filling in his time with rowing and the amusing playing with paints that he called painting; and she saw the days slipping by one after another with never a sign that his going would not be for her the final closing of the door. John would be going back to his reading for the Bar; Jane, perhaps, would be going to Nigeria; and then old Ann and the old vicar would go on for a few more years together. A few more years would mean the neighbourhood of forty.

Ann went in slowly to see that tea was ready for herself and her father.

II.

John and Jane and Robin were all back soon after tea, and then began the scramble against time to be ready for the dance in Falmouth. The Pembertons' big motor launch was to leave the old quay at seven o'clock and the vicarage party had an invitation to join it. The run across Falmouth harbour was a matter of only fifteen minutes.

Jane was tremendously excited. "My dress ready, Ann?"

"Yes, dear. You'll find it laid out on the

"Well, be a sport. Come and help us on with it. And I wouldn't trust myself to do my own hair. You must give us a hand."

They were all in the drawing-room, and the lamps had just been lit. Ann was sitting on a large downy couch, her father at her side. Robin, strumming at a baby grand, had his back to her; but at that moment he swung round on the stool.

"But Ann is coming, too?" he asked.

A strange silence fell upon the room, as though someone had hurled a bomb which had not yet exploded and there was tense waiting for the bang.

"But——" said the vicar.
"But——" said Jane.

And John said "But-

It was left to Jane to achieve the sentence. "But old Ann hasn't been to a dance for years!"

"I'm sure Ann doesn't like dancing," said

John.

"Oh, no," Jane hurried on. "Ann always stays in to read to father. He never goes out at night except to evening service, and he can't be left alone."

The vicar patted Ann's hand affectionately. "No, Robin, my boy," he said. "We couldn't get on at nights without our Ann. We're at a most fascinating part of Milman's History of the Jews, aren't we, Ann?"

"Yes," Ann said, addressing Robin, who had now come across and stood by the couch. "Since mother died someone has to be with father in the evenings. He hates

being alone."

Ann's heart fluttered rather wildly as Robin positively scowled. "Well," he said. "I'm dashed, you know, if it seems quite fair. Look here; I'll make a sporting offer. It'll be new to me to read Mr. Milman on the Jews, and apparently it'll be rather a change for Ann to go to a dance. Let's swop places. I'll read to you to-night, sir."

"But Ann positively hasn't got a dress,"

Jane burst out.

And simultaneously John: "Oh, but, look here, Robin, old man. You mustn't talk rot, you know. Ann really enjoys this sort of thing. After all, this is your holiday, not Ann's. Ann's got all her life before her to enjoy this place."

"Yes, of course," Ann said quietly. "All my life." And getting up, she took Jane by the arm and led her from the room. "Come along, my dear. No more arguing. You're late enough as it is."

run away and change. I was thinking . . . thinking . . . " And his chin sagged forward again.

So Ann found him when she came down later with the *History of the Jews* under her arm. He was sound asleep and she did not

wake him to continue that most fascinating chapter of they had which Milman reached. Nor did she read to herself. She quietly made up the fire and sat down before it. "She really enjoys this sort of thing. . . . All her life before her to enjoy it." These words of John's were the ones that had hurt her most. But, after all, was he to blame? Was Jane to blame? Was their father to blame? Somehow they had all blundered in the course of the years into this position,

this dependence on Ann to
be the central
pivot turning
always in the
same way, in
the same spot,

"There, you see," said John triumphantly. "It's no good trying to persuade her to go. All our efforts are wasted. She absolutely enjoys bossing us all about."

Robin ruminated darkly for a while. "Well," he said dubiously at last. "I see one thing clearly enough, John. Ann's a sport of a high order."

This idea caused John to chuckle quietly. "My dear boy, Ann is one of nature's old maids. She doesn't know a step invented since the war. In a dance-room she'd be about as happy as father in Tattersall's ring."

"Eh, boy, eh?" said the vicar, jerking up a head which was beginning to sag sleepily. "Tattersall's, eh? Now you two in order that others might move through a variety of experience. They thought she liked it. She was sure they were honest about that. And, till now, certainly, she had not found it disagreeable, her comfortable and equal progress through the years. She realised that had anyone but Robin Elder been concerned, she would

not have felt slighted at being left out of the party. She would, honestly, have preferred to stay at home. The others were not to blame.

But there it was, this new and tremendous



"Ann carried the cushions down to the boat after lunch, and saw Robin and Jane embark."

She felt so profoundly changed that she almost wondered that no one had noticed that she was not the Ann of a few weeks ago.

Had Robin noticed? She would have given much to have that question answered. Was his intervention that night merely the impulse of a generous nature, or was it in any way a particular feeling directed to her? She would have given more to have

> But, meantime, here was the vicar coming to with a start and exclaiming: "Splendid, Ann, splendid. Thank you very much, my dear. Most interesting. And now I must

> > be off to bed. You'll stay up for the others, won't you?"

When John proposed in the morning that he and Robin should take a flying trip to Penzance, Robin pleaded to be excused. He was sitting at the breakfast table, pampering the queer taste of Ann's spaniel for toast crusts. seemed a little absent and preoccupied, Ann thought,

and she put it down tiredness. It had been nearly three o'clock when they got back from Falmouth. Neither Jane nor the vicar was down; Ann, Robin and John had the breakfast room to themselves.

"No; let's have a day's rest, old man," Robin urged. "We've been racketing all over the county this

last ten days, and I'm quite willing to sit still for a few hours."

"Better get father to introduce you to his

herbaceous borders," said John facetiously.
"Or ask Ann to explain all about the brasses in the church. Yes; that's an idea. You know, Ann's the world's greatest expert on our brasses. It's been her life's study."

"I should be very glad----" Robin began,

when John cut in again.

"And, come to think of it, Ann, you certainly must show him the brasses in return for his splendid championship of you last night. Yes, you owe it to him. Young Roper——"

"Oh, come, John, come," Robin interrupted, crimsoning suddenly; "cut it out. That's done with. I was unnecessarily rude

to young Roper."

"Well, never be it said that the days of chivalry are ended. It was a good sight to see," went on tactless John. "You must know, Ann, that Jane was telling young Roper that you had nearly come to the dance yourself. 'Good heavens!' says Roper. 'Not Ann! You don't say old Ann is having a second blooming?'"

Poor Ann! A rotten age, thirty-five! A fiery tide rushed into her face and her eyes

moistened.

"Cut it out, John, you fool, cut it out," Robin was muttering savagely, kicking his friend's shin vigorously under the table; but tact, and even sometimes commonsense, were not strong cards with John Bennison, and he went plunging on as though relating some really diverting thing that concerned

nobody present.

"Well, this young Galahad happened to be hovering near with the fair Miss Pemberton, whom he forthwith drops, and going up with some menace taps young Roper on the shoulder. 'Pardon me, sir,' he says, 'have I had the pleasure of being introduced to you?' Young Roper, rather surprised, eyes him up and down, and then says, 'I think not. Don't know you from Adam.' 'Then I'm sorry I can't have the pleasure of punching your nose,' says Robin. 'And that's the only reason why I regret not knowing you.' And with that he snaps his fingers under the aforesaid nose and walks away."

Ann writhed under a tumult of conflicting feelings: anger at young Roper's impertinence, shame at John's casual acceptance of the circumstances, and a throbbing joy at Robin's intervention. For the second time that night he had spoken for her when everybody else seemed to consider there was no particular reason for anybody to speak. She hung her head over her plate with

pretence of being busy with her food, till John pushed back his chair with an unceremonious "Scuse me" and left the table.

"Just going to overhaul the old bike," he explained. "See you anon, Robin. By the way, Ann, got any old dusters?"

For the first time in its existence, so far as any member of the Bennison family could remember in recalling the circumstances later, the institution failed to function according to plan.

"I haven't finished breakfast yet, John.

Ask Jenny. She may have some."

Resentment at John's conduct had gradually emerged as the dominating feeling out of the struggling complexity, and the words came if not angrily at any rate with a certain asperity. John paused a moment at the unaccustomed tone, then shrugged his shoulders and went. Ann felt tears rising to her eyes at having been betrayed into hasty speech, and after struggling with them for a moment in silence she too got up and said: "Pardon me, Robin; I've got a lot to see to. And I must find those dusters for John. And . . . and . . . thank you so much for what you said last night."

She hardly knew how she got the words out, her face aflame, her tongue stammering; and as soon as they were spoken she walked rapidly to the door. Robin's surprising remark arrested her with the door-knob in her hand. "I'd see him hanged before I'd get his dusters. Let him get 'em himself. You're not his batman."

Now if there was one thing more surprising to Ann than to find herself wavering, even for a moment, in her lifelong habit, it was to find herself aided and abetted in her defalcation. She stood irresolute for a moment; and so absurd are life's caprices that in that ridiculous mental perplexity about a duster all her past and future joined issue. Her future won. "Right," she said. "I won't."

Robin had got up from the table, a light of malicious merriment playing in his eyes. "Come here, Ann," he commanded.

She came, wondering. He led her to the window, threw it up, and called to John who was stinking the lawn with the cleaning of an acetylene lamp: "Hi, John! Seen anything of Ann's tennis racket?"

"Not the faintest idea where it is," John

answered.

"Well, I can tell you. It's in the toolshed. Run and get it, there's a good chap."

With some reluctance, John made off and

presently returned, grumbling. "Can't find it. It's not in the tool-shed."

"Sorry, old boy," Robin answered cheerily.

"Did I say the tool-shed? I meant the summerhouse. I saw it there yesterday.

D'you mind sprinting along for it?"

John came back and handed the racket

through the window.

"Thanks. Ann and I are going to have a quiet set or two."

``What!"

It was a surprised and outraged Jane, just entering the breakfast room. "I did think you were going to sit and have a chat with me while I was having breakfast, Ann. Besides, father hasn't had breakfast yet."

"Splendid opportunity for your chat," said Robin brightly. "You can be looking after your father and chatting and having a

first-rate time."

"I'm much too tired to look after anybody's breakfast but my own," Jane answered. "I wasn't in bed till half-past three."

"No more was Ann, and she's been up an hour."

"Oh, but Ann's used to early rising. She

positively adores it."

"Ay, ay," rumbled the vicar, ambling in and smiling rosily round on everybody. "Wonderful girl, Ann, wonderful girl. Good morning, my dear, good morning. We'll go through those accounts after breakfast."

"Oh, but, sir," Robin pleaded, "I was hoping that Ann might have a set or two of tennis with me. And then she's promised to show me the brasses in the church."

"Dear, dear, dear," moaned the vicar.

"Those accounts, you know, those accounts, my boy! One must be businesslike. Now, Jane——"

"Yes, most businesslike, I'm sure, sir," Robin answered briskly.

"No, no, she's not. I was going to suggest Jane for tennis."

"Well, another sporting offer, sir. I'll go through the accounts with you after Ann and I have had a set or two. I'm no end of a man at accounts. Now, Jane, quick, tea—tea for your father. Come along, Ann. Tennis is splendid on top of a hearty breakfast."

III.

It was incredible. Ann had played tennis in the morning. The morning, when all sorts of things have to be done if the household sailing is to be smooth for the day; the morning, when Ann, aproned and demure, had for years been seen toiling steadily away at this duty and that; the morning, when it was difficult enough in all conscience to keep pace with the unhurrying but persistent sun. A sense of something insecure in the foundations of existence had entered into the vicarage. The vicar was grave when Robin went in to help with the accounts. The young man glimpsed Jane in an apron and congratulated her on her appearance.

"Quite the matron."

Jane sniffed.

No one was more shaken than Ann herself. That hesitation at the door-knob had led to so much. And yet she did not regret it. John had gone off somewhere on his bike and had not asked for a push off. The tennis was over. Robin had gone in to the study. Ann, obsessed with a sense of freedom, did not return to the house. She strolled through the garden gate across a field, into the churchyard. The swallows had come and with shrill twittering notes were swirling like lithe bent bows about the old tower. Back from the South, back from Africa . . . Nigeria . . .

It was an incoherent and jumbled reverie that she fell into as she stood rooted there looking at the swift beauty of the birds. Robin had said nothing, done nothing, that a high-spirited lad might not have done; and yet . . . Perhaps at thirty-five one clutches at nothings. But there were those two strange interventions in her behalf and Robin's queer outbreak of the morning.

She entered the church. In its ancient and accustomed quiet she felt that she would recover her poise, get the derailed coach of her mind running again on the old smooth track. But the church failed her. Something stronger than all the old influences of her life was at work within her. She had never before been restless in this place. She was restless now. She sat down and tried to compose her mind, but no sooner was she seated than a swallow, flying through the open door, began to fill the building with a frightened crying. Some fatal command seemed to forbid it to go out again by the way it had come in; and hither and thither it plunged and cried, finding restraining walls whichever way it moved. Now, attracted by the lights of a window, it dashed itself against the glass and recoiled with a loud distress; now it perched for a while palpitating on a beam under the dim roof, only to drop off and go once more with unending clamour, searching, searching, searching, for the freedom of sun and air, the freedom of unconfined journeying above the earth.

Helpless to help, Ann watched the bird, and felt that her own heart was a sharer of its case. The narrow walls of her environment had never until the last few days seemed irksome; but now her heart was urgently demanding a way out, freedom to choose her own path in the sun and the air, freedom to love.

At last, with a desperate swirl, the swallow came violently against a wall and fell like a stone almost at her feet. She took it in her hand and saw that its breast was palpitating still. There were tears in her eyes as she turned to carry it out into the sunlight. With the tears in her eyes and the injured bird in her hand, she confronted Robin Elder.

"Poor little thing, poor little thing," he said; and he put out his hand and with a touch exquisitely gentle enfolded the hand that held the bird. Ann's heart fluttered as wildly as the swallow's breast as she turned her tear-filled eyes to Robin's face. It was as though that unhappy moment had summed up all the distress of the last few days. She sat on a seat and cried, honestly and frankly; and Robin, when he had laid the bird on a sunny bank outside, came and sat at her side. For a long time he did not speak; and when he did, it was as though his thoughts, as he had watched her in the church before she saw him, had run on the same lines as her own. Indeed, the parable was obvious.

"Ann," he said, "I have put the little thing out in the air, but I'm afraid it's too late." Then for a while he was silent, and at last went on: "I have been watching

someone else lately longing for the sun and air and freedom. Ann, I can help you to it."

He bent towards her and took her hand and drew it down from her face.

"W-why aren't you helping f-father with the accounts?" she sobbed.

Robin laughed. "He wouldn't have me. He said they were too intricate—altogether beyond me. Nobody but old Ann could understand them. He's inconsolable about your scandalous behaviour."

"I must g-go and h-help him at once." But she made no effort to hitch action to her words.

Robin released her hand and stood up, smiling. "Let it never be said that I am keeping you from your duty. If you want to go, go."

"I d-don't."

And Ann got up too, and flung her arms round Robin's neck and cried herself into happiness.

IV.

When Robin, with none of the diffidence which young men are supposed to show, approached the vicar on the subject of Ann that very day, he began by saying that he had designs to take one of Mr. Bennison's daughters with him to Nigeria. The vicar put up as good a show of surprise as he could, and then said: "You can imagine, my dear boy, what a loss Jane will be to us all."

His surprise became very real when Robin answered: "Jane! You are under a misapprehension, sir. I'm afraid I've already developed a family habit and spoken to old Ann about it."

THE CALL.

OH, I do long to go
Where there doth brood in solitude
A silence as of night,
Where cool, deep waters flow
'Mid calm and peace and quiet,
And there to rest upon the breast
Of Mother Earth, her own
Returned to her own,
And for a moment's dear respite
Be with myself—alone.

JOHN INGLISHAM.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

By H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

DR three months William Berwick had been gradually losing his tanned complexion. He had acquired it as the result of five years in Mesopotamia on an engineering contract, and he watched it go without regret. He wished, indeed, that it would fade away a little more quickly, for he objected to carrying about, wherever he went, a face the colour of a lemon.

At this stage in the metamorphosis his father, a widower, was despatched on a diplomatic mission to Rome, and Berwick, who had been considering a certain project, urged him to put a caretaker into the house at Marlborough Gate.

"I," he explained, "shall buy Frederick Whitstable's houseboat and spend the time on the river until I can shave without feeling

bilious."

Accordingly, the day following Sir Eustace Berwick's departure from England, William Berwick interviewed Frederick Whitstable at a club in Knightsbridge to which both belonged.

"For some months," Berwick said to his vis-à-vis in the club lounge, "you have been pestering me to purchase all sorts of things belonging to you, not excluding a car of superseded design—"

"Too late," interrupted Frederick Whit-

stable promptly: "I've sold it."

"—and a houseboat."

"A floating palace," amended the younger man enthusiastically. "Completely stocked and furnished with every convenience. Moreover, the fishing for fifty yards either side goes with it. I should not dream of selling, if—er—the weather were not so uncertain."

Frederick Whitstable lit a cigarette in a long holder. He was slightly built, fair and dapper, and, despite assistance from a private income, invariably in low water financially towards the end of the quarter.

"Where is this houseboat?"

"It lies over against Hook Island, near Brundon Reach. The fellow in the boathouse opposite keeps an eye on it for me, and for a small consideration he'll supply you with bait. If you like I'll introduce you to Mrs. Maitland, so that you won't be at a loose end of an evening."

"Who is this lady?"

"Mrs. Maitland? She's a widow who lives in the locality and entertains pretty extensively. Her son is one of the candidates in a bye-election that's being fought in the district and her brother is Professor Eden. The Professor has just returned from your part of the world, or at all events from Egypt, and will be staying with her, and you'll be able to swop tall stories. That reminds me: how would you like to hear him lecture this afternoon?"

"No, thanks; they're not in my line."

"Not on big-game hunting?"

William Berwick accepted the ticket that his friend held out and glanced idly over it in search of the title of the lecture. At the time the tickets had been printed, however, the title had not been chosen.

"What's it called?"

"Er—I forget exactly, although it was mentioned in the letter. 'The Quest of the Tiger,' I think, or something of the kind. Illustrated with cinematograph pictures."

"Then it will be dark inside," mused William Berwick. "All right; thanks. I may drop in for ten minutes."

"Er—and the houseboat?"

"Give me till this evening to decide."

Frederick Whitstable coughed. "There's just one other point I ought to mention," he said casually: "I'd fixed to pop down tomorrow evening; some people are coming on board for a rubber of bridge. But, of course, you can have possession any time you like."

"That's all right," Berwick returned hospitably: "let the fixture stand in any case."

Tickets had not been offered to the general public, but for all that the hall was fairly full; and the lecturer, recently back from a trip up the Nile, was at the climax of his address. The rustling of his notes had ceased, and his mild voice now wooed the audience with blandness, while the latest picture on the screen depicted a nodding flower, many times magnified, reacting in a curious manner to the stimulus of a striped insect the size of an otter. As the insect was seen to crawl in a sinister fashion on to one of the petals of the flower, a faint scream pierced the gloom in the back of the hall, and a restless movement became general in most parts of the auditorium. In fact, it is safe to add that everybody was interested in Professor Eden's biological disclosures except a young lady in the third row of stalls and William Berwick, who was sitting next to her.

"Notice," the lecturer was saying, "that the insect's weight, slight though it is, is nevertheless sufficient to depress the petal

and so expose the stamen.'

William Berwick noticed the significant fact pointed out by the Professor, but in the most perfunctory manner; his mind was elsewhere. Earlier in the course of the lecture a late-comer had been directed to the seat at his left. Standing up to let her pass by, he had been disturbed by the quality of the soft, apologetic voice; then, the ray from the operating-machine was shedding an effulgence which enabled him to profit by an occasional glance in her direction; and gradually there formed in his mind a wish that something should happen to upset the convention that must keep him mute and inglorious in the presence of so much charm.

Shortly after the appearance of the insect picture his desire was gratified. A female attendant brought Berwick's neighbour a cup of tea, and that and the convention were upset almost simultaneously. The tea spilled over Berwick's knees, and as it was hot, Berwick rose, rescuing the cup dexterously as he did so. Meanwhile, a lady with a long cloak passed from a seat in the second row of stalls into the gangway and quitted the hall in entire ignorance of the fact that she had wasted the cost of a cup of tea and marred a pair of grey tweed trousers recently made to the measure of a man who required something of an outsize in all

articles of apparel with the possible exception of his hats.

"I'm awfully sorry," exclaimed Berwick's

neighbour in an awed whisper.

"Of no consequence at all," returned William Berwick pleasantly. He sat down and mopped his knees with a large handkerchief. To the attendant he said: "Please bring this lady another cup of tea."

"It doesn't matter, thank you."

"... while a characteristic of this wonderful little insect," the lecturer said in slightly louder tones, "is its strange partiality for humid places."

The attendant moved away.

"I'm so sorry this has happened," whispered the girl. "Is there anything—would you like another handkerchief?"

"No, thanks," returned Berwick cheer-

fully; "I'll just air them for a bit."

Not sharing with the insect a partiality for humid places, he delicately lifted the sodden parts of his trousers away from his knees; and then it was that the girl beside him broke down. She hid her face in her hands and her shoulders shook, and for some time after the silent paroxysm was over she kept her lower lip between her teeth, and her head hung down contritely. Stealing a glance at the soft profile, Berwick guessed her to be no more than twenty-one or twentytwo years of age. Her hands were free of any adornment, and in the aura from the beam of light her hair shimmered, and he saw that it had been waved. Its colour eluded him, and so did the colour of her eyes, but he surmised that the one was fair and the other grey, or, perhaps, brown.

"Please don't take it to heart," he ventured to remark. "I am really here under false pretences and deserve it. The friend who passed on the ticket is probably laughing, too. He said the subject of the lecture

was the quest of the tiger."

"The quest of the tiger-bee," corrected the girl—"an insect found only in the Nile valley. . . . All the same, I am very sorry; it would serve me right if you were to sue me for damages."

"Oh, as for the mishap, that was not your fault at all. In fact, if I were not, for the time being, socially disfigured, I should venture to offer you a cup of tea after the lecture in place of the one you have lost."

"It would be more than I deserve."

"Such," the lecturer was concluding, "is perhaps the strangest of all the antics indulged in by the curious little creature whose life-history is so intimately connected with this rare and beautiful flower."

The audience applauded, though it was not apparent whether their approbation was for the lecturer or the insect. As the lights came on several people rose and donned wraps, and Berwick found himself gazing into a pair of hazel eyes. At the imminence of the parting a great regret swept over him, for he had never before in the whole of his twenty-eight years seen anyone with whom he felt so reluctant to lose touch.

Evidently it was her shopping that had made her late for the lecture; probably she had been explaining as much to her uncle. Or had she been telling him about the mishap to the tea-cup?

On one circumstance Berwick looked back with satisfaction: she had gazed upon him without visible loathing, which might well mean that his aspect of being a martyr to yellow jaundice was much less marked than he had supposed. Nevertheless, as Miss Eden was apparently in her uncle's charge,



"Iris, after a startled glance of recognition, sank demurely into a seat, but the Professor remained standing in order to place a black despatch-case on the rack."

"You will let me get you a taxi?" he volunteered with sudden desperation.

"No, thank you. My uncle has arranged for a car."

"Your uncle?"

"Professor Eden," explained Miss Iris Eden, nodding towards the platform.

Berwick carried away with him from the lecture-hall the mental picture of a slender girl in grey who was holding a small parcel and chatting to a tall, grizzled veteran in horn-rimmed glasses and loose-fitting clothes.

and as her uncle was soon to visit Brundon Reach to stay with his sister, Berwick discovered an alternative reason for buying Frederick Whitstable's houseboat, and he left a cheque for Whitstable at the club after tea the same evening.

He set out for Brundon Reach shortly after lunch-time on the following day—the fifth of five days' intermittent rain; and as the train commenced to move from the terminus, two people got into the first-class smoking compartment in which he had installed himself. They were Professor

Eden and Iris, the Professor wearing an overcoat the collar of which was turned up about his ears, and Iris a close-fitting velvet hat and a raincoat.

Iris, after a startled glance of recognition, sank demurely into a seat, but the Professor remained standing in order to place a black

despatch-case on the rack.

After Egypt," he remarked to no one in particular, "our English summer is exceedingly inclement. Such conditions, no doubt, account for the hardiness and resource of our native species in the hymenoptera."

As he finished speaking he happened to glance at William Berwick, and Berwick, under the impression that he was being addressed, politely agreed with him. wick was greatly gratified by the chance of making the Professor's acquaintance so promptly, particularly as Frederick Whitstable's services towards this end were hardly likely to ensure for the beneficiary an enthusiastic reception.

But the Professor made no further remark. Sitting down beside Iris, he passed a handkerchief over his moist beard, glancing at Berwick as he did so. During the marked pause that followed Berwick shifted rest-

lessly.

"On the other hand," he doggedly resumed, "it's hardly possible to spend any length of time in Egypt without being struck by the hardiness of the insects there."

"Quite so," returned the Professor. had been polishing his glasses, and when he put them on again the pale-blue eyes behind the lenses twinkled. "May I ask whether your impressions of Egypt have been gathered recently?"

"I spent two or three years in Egypt

during the war."

"Indeed? I am myself only very recently back from the same country, our trip, for political reasons, having been abandoned before the projected time for us to return. You may have read of the expedition at the time—my name, by the way, is Eden."

Berwick glanced towards Iris.

"This gentleman was at your lecture yesterday, Uncle Tony," Iris generously explained: "he was the victim of the mishap with the tea."

"That is so," Berwick rejoined. name is Berwick-William Berwick."

The Professor looked at Berwick sharply. "I regret the accident," he briskly announced, "but these little things are bound to occur in places which insist upon serving refreshments during the proceedings. I may say that I am strongly against such interruptions. On behalf of my niece I repudiate any liability. You must proceed against the management."

"But there's no question of proceedings, Uncle Tony," Iris pointed out—" at least, I believe not."

"Certainly not," confirmed Berwick.

"Hm! Then I am sorry to have leapt to that conclusion," said the Professor. "It never occurred to me that our meeting here was purely the result of coincidence.'

"I-er-own a houseboat at Brundon,"

explained Berwick in self-defence.

At Brundon? Really! Then the coincidence is an extraordinary one.

is where we ourselves alight."

As though to discount his brusqueness, the Professor thereupon engaged Berwick in friendly conversation on the subject of their joint Egyptian experiences, and Berwick learned that Iris had been with her uncle on his expedition. The Professor made Berwick known to her and went on to speak of his plans. Thus Berwick learned that Professor Eden was staying only a short time at Brundon and was then going to lecture in Scotland and that Iris was going with him; and as these tidings were simmering in the mind of the dismayed listener the train slowed down in the tiny station serving Brundon Reach.

The rain had stopped, and as Iris and the Professor had come by an earlier train than the one by which their hostess expected them, and so found no vehicle waiting for them, they left all luggage, with the exception of the black despatch-case, to be brought away later and set out to walk, Berwick, who found that his way lay along the same road, accompanying them. They walked for some time in an easterly direction and at last came upon the river, alongside which the road now curved until it had negotiated the loop in which was the narrow crescent of wilderness known locally as Hook By this time more rain was falling; but as the little party came in sight of the western end of the island and the square, white shape of the houseboat over against it loomed through the downfall, Berwick conceived the notion of entertaining his companions on board until the weather should have cleared once more, for to make the most of the encounter was a course upon which he was desperately resolved.

As the Professor and Iris took shelter beneath a tree, Berwick trotted away towards a shanty lower down the river-bank.

erection he judged to be the boathouse referred to by Frederick Whitstable, for one or two dinghies were moored to a landingstage in front of it. No protest came from inside the building as he cast loose and stepped into one of the boats, and soon its bow parted the reeds opposite the tree.

"Won't you come on board till this is

over?" he called out.

"I simply must see what the inside of a houseboat is like," Iris whispered to her uncle, as she led him towards the bank.

"Weather looks like lasting for a bit," William Berwick remarked with satisfaction, as he assisted Iris into the dinghy; "and you'll find the houseboat drier than the tree. At least," he added under his breath, "I hope so."

"This is very thoughtful of you indeed," returned the Professor, as he crouched down beside Iris. "As for the weather lasting, please don't misunderstand me if I say that I hope you're mistaken: I am lecturing quite early this evening near Brundon and must be on the spot in good time."

The houseboat was an old one, but had been recently renovated; and the lock was new and stiff. Rapidly tiring of trying to turn the wards with the key which had reached him by post that morning, Berwick wrenched the lock off and ushered his guests into a compartment flamboyantly furnished as a combined dining- and drawingroom. Mirrors panelled the walls and a red-plush settee lined each side of the cabin below the windows, while, grouped about a low table, octagonal in shape, were a number of card-tables and gaily-upholstered basketchairs, which rested in the pile of a gaudycoloured carpet. Observing a question in Iris's eyes, William Berwick, who was not yet prepared for any questions, hastily relieved Iris of her coat, and the Professor of his, and took the garments away to dry.

Iris looked round timidly and, unsuspicious of the fact that Berwick had only very recently acquired the houseboat and had had nothing to do with the furnishing of it, magnanimously attributed the violent colourscheme of the apartment to the influence of the East on a Western imagination. Other interiors of the houseboat she resolved upon viewing before taking her departure, for she felt that the houseboat could tell her more about William Berwick than William Berwick, in the short time at his disposal, could reveal about himself. Why she should wish to know more about William Berwick was a reflection that did not occur to her at the

time, and even if it had occurred to her, it would have made no difference to her curiosity. Ever since he had so amiably received in his lap the contents of her teacup, she had found William Berwick frequently in her thoughts.

The Professor did not appear to share this interest. "We must remember," he remarked, sitting down on the edge of a basket-chair, "that we mustn't stay too long if we are to arrive at your aunt's in time for tea before the address."

Iris perched on the side of the chair and stroked the back of her uncle's head.

"I believe you would rather step on to the platform drenched to the skin than miss the opportunity of speaking."

"A promise, my child, is a promise. Moreover, the chance of assisting your aunt to amuse the parishioners is one I am

reluctant to let slip."

In fact, the Professor was invariably flattered to be asked for an address, no matter who the audience might be, and his notes were always compiled with the utmost care. In arranging for the Professor to speak at her entertainment, however, Mrs. Maitland lacked the motive attributed to her by her brother. Her gathering, though ostensibly non-political, was designed as a counter-attraction to an important opposition-meeting which was to take place that evening in the village itself, and-unknown to the Professor—she had caused him to be billed as an explorer and hunter of game. Had the Professor known this, his anxiety might have been less acute.

"What," he commented in due course,

"has become of our host?"

As though the words were his cue, William Berwick entered with a tray that supported a tea-pot and some cups and saucers.

"Sorry to have been so long," he said: "couldn't get the stove going. I hope you don't mind condensed milk?"

"How thoughtful!" exclaimed Iris.

"Most considerate!" supplemented her uncle cordially.

There was no doubt that William Berwick had done the right thing. The grateful glance that Iris had bestowed upon him would alone have reassured him. Modestly he sank into a low chair in mute invitation to her to preside; and she began to pour out the tea. How charmingly she poured

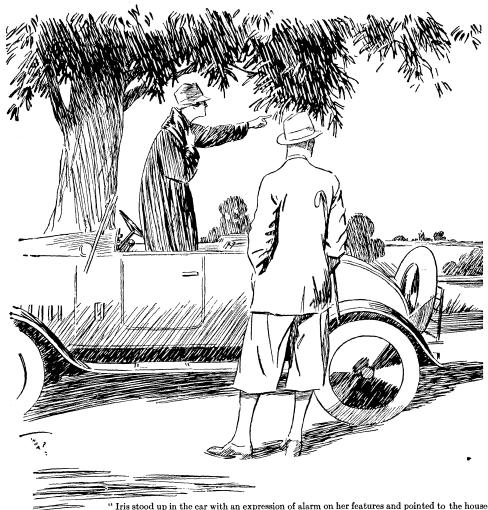
Though not a conversationalist, he presently set out to extend himself, and in this endeavour the Professor met him more

out tea!

than half-way, for he formally invited Berwick to visit Brundon Lodge to meet its mistress. The opportunity to dispense with the somewhat doubtful services in this connection of Frederick Whitstable was one that suited Berwick perfectly.

In due course he elicited the information that Iris was fond of the river. He volun-

parts of the houseboat, and to this request Berwick thoughtlessly yielded. She was amused by the space-saving contrivances of the kitchen, but found the upholstered splendour of the sleeping cubicles disprcportionate to their size. She lingered in the roomier of these apartments to examine an array of pictures on the walls, and while



"Iris stood up in the car with an expression of alarm on her features and pointed to the houseboat. Berwick swung round. . . . The houseboat was in mid-stream. Evidently it had been forced from its moorings by a gradual rising of the river."

teered to take her fishing in the dinghy one day before she left for Scotland. Iris tentatively accepted the invitation. Spurred by the encouragement, he fixed upon the following afternoon as the occasion for the outing. The appointment was acceptable to her and had the Professor's sanction. William Berwick felt that all was well.

After tea Iris asked if she might see other

she was thus occupied Berwick assisted the Professor to don his overcoat. When she rejoined them, Berwick ferried her uncle and her across to the bank.

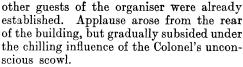
"Good-bye," remarked the Professor at parting; "but we shall expect to see you again shortly."

He moved away, but Iris turned to look Berwick straight in the eye. "Good-bye," she echoed coldly—" and please don't bother about the fishing: I've changed my mind."

In a stunned fashion, Berwick watched her overtake the Professor.

There was a private road from Brundon Lodge to the barn in which Mrs. Maitland had caused preparations to be made for the

> entertainment that she had organised, and at a few minutes before seven she, Iris and an elderly gentleman of military bearing were all walking along the Mrs. Maitland, a abreast. tall and handsome woman with energetic ways, had just received news that the



"I was under the impression," whispered Mrs. Maitland, leaning towards Iris, "that the Professor had come on ahead of us."

"He went back for his notes," Iris told "He'll be here any moment now."

"Then we may as well begin."

She nodded to the Colonel, who clutched the lapels of his coat and rose to his feet.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "in introducing to you Professor Anthony Eden, F.R.S., I am conscious of a rare privilege." He paused and glanced about him in search of the Professor. "Where the deuce has he

got to?" he demanded nervously in a voice easily audible eight rows away.

In the pause someone started to clap, and at the same moment Mrs. Maitland, in response to a signal the doorway, $_{
m from}$ quitted the platform.

"Conscious of a rare privilege," repeated the Colonel uneasily. "No one would be conscious of anything else while — er — performing the office that I—er—perform this evening. I'm sure you'll all—that we

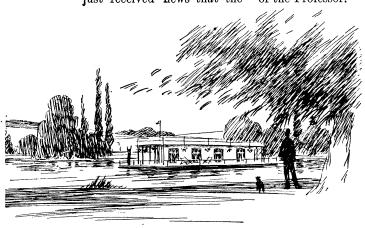
shall all—thoroughly appreciate what he has to tell us. In this conviction I shall retire and make way for him."

He sat down relievedly, but at this point a messenger whispered earnestly into his ear. After perceptible hesitation he stood up again, pulling at his moustache and muttering under his breath.

The messenger meanwhile whispered to Iris, who was glad of the chance to withdraw from prominence. Outside the building she found her hostess in a state of excitement.

"Your uncle, Iris, has left his notes on some houseboat or other. He wants you to take him along in the car to get them. It won't take more than fifteen minutes. The Colonel can go on speaking till you return. Here's the car."

As he returned from a thoughtful stroll that evening, the sight of a motor-car



"He was pivoting wildly in search of his bearings, and, catching sight of his niece and Berwick, he raised an arm in mute appeal.

barn was filling rapidly, and her features wore a serene expression much in contrast to the gloomy one on the seasoned countenance of Colonel Wendover, who had been asked to open the proceedings and was in mufti. A man of few words, the Colonel did not relish his task, but as, from reasons not unconnected with a vacancy in his establishment caused by the demise, some years ago, of Mrs. Wendover, he much desired to please his hostess, he had consented to undergo the ordeal. He had secretly prepared a brief speech which introduced the Professor to the audience and expressed the conviction that all would enjoy themselves. Though aware that he was expected to allude sympathetically to young Maitland's candidature in the bye-election, the Colonel proposed then to sit down.

The three people entered the barn and ascended to the platform, where two or three standing motionless in the road opposite the houseboat hastened William Berwick in that direction, for in the solitary occupant of the car he recognised Iris, from whom he had already decided to request an explanation of the cancelled outing without further delay.

"My uncle has gone on board the houseboat to get his despatch-case," she began, as soon as he came near. "The notes for his lecture are in it, and the entertainment has already begun; otherwise——"

"Quite all right," rejoined Berwick cordially. "By the way, now that the opportunity arises, it occurs to me to say that if...."

"—otherwise, of course, he wouldn't dream of——"

"Quite so," Berwick anticipated—" of doing so. He is welcome at any time. In fact, it would be rather an idea if all of you up at the house could come along and spend a day on the river. There'd be boating and bathing, of course, and for those who don't happen to be keen on either—er—fishing and—er——"

"Yes, I know—cards," interjected Iris despairingly. "Oh, I knew I was not mistaken."

"Well, yes—cards, if you like," responded Berwick with a stare of surprise at the outburst. "Meanwhile, regarding the little expedition for to-morrow that we planned on board, it occurs to me to wonder whether, in some inadvertent way or another, I may have offended——"

"I have asked my uncle to leave a note on board to explain."

As soon as she had uttered these words, Iris stood up in the car with an expression of alarm on her features and pointed to the houseboat. Berwick swung round. . . .

The houseboat was in mid-stream. Evidently it had been forced from its moorings by a gradual rising of the river, for Berwick could see the uprooted stakes on the bank of the island. The Professor was on deck, grasping the despatch-case. He was pivoting wildly in search of his bearings, and, catching sight of his niece and Berwick, he raised an arm in mute appeal.

With the object of overtaking the houseboat and boarding it, but with no notion of a procedure with which to follow up these prompt steps, Berwick sped to the boathouse and embarked upon the pursuit in a rowboat. He had no difficulty in overhauling the houseboat, nor in clambering on board; but as he stood up on deck, a new vista of the river opened before him, with the fore-ground largely occupied by another house-boat moored broadside on to the current. The danger of a collision was realised simultaneously by Berwick, the Professor and a card-party of young men on the roof of the other craft, but before a move for safety could be made by any of the individuals involved, the collision took place, and a member of the card-party was hurled backward into the river, where it became apparent that he had never learned to swim.

A terrific splash suddenly sprayed the Professor with water. It was William Berwick spoiling another suit of clothes. Berwick reached the unfortunate cardplayer and expertly turned him over on his back, while the Professor, forgetful of the fact that five hundred people were under the impression that he had something to tell them, knelt excitedly at the side of the now locked houseboat and reached down to assist Berwick and his burden on board.

Oozing water, Berwick stood up and straightened his tie. The card-player, coughing violently, but still tenaciously grasping an ace-of-spades, also rose; and Berwick found himself gazing upon the well-known features of Frederick Whitstable.

" Hallo!"

"Hallo!" replied Frederick Whitstable feebly.

"I thought," resumed Berwick slowly, "that you said your party was to take place on board your—or, rather, my—house-boat?"

Frederick Whitstable looked vaguely round towards his friends, who stood gazing upon the scene from the roof of the other vessel

"Well, that is my—or, rather, your—houseboat," he replied, indicating the small, yellow vessel on which his friends were grouped. "What are you doing on this one?"

The Professor coughed. "Had you not better decide this question after you have changed?" he inquired.

William Berwick, whose luggage had since been brought to his own houseboat, that is to say, to the yellow one, was able to change into dry clothes on the spot, but Frederick Whitstable, who had motored down with one of his friends, was obliged to proceed as he was to the hotel in Brundon in which he and his friend had booked rooms. As for the Professor, having assured himself of his inability to be of any service to the sodden

victim of the collision, or to Berwick, he had departed hastily to deliver his address.

As soon as he had changed, Berwick, with the help of the two remaining members of the card-party, towed back the white houseboat to its original location, but although they lived in the neighbourhood, his two assistants could give him no information about the ownership of the vessel beyond what was common rumour—that it had only recently been taken by two gentlemen from town who had left it during the week at different times to go elsewhere either on business or pleasure. Berwick therefore moored it to fresh stakes, parted from the two friends and then went on board to find the note which Iris had asked her uncle to leave for him.

In the twilight that straggled through the cabin windows he eventually read the following words, which had been scribbled by Iris on a sheet of notepaper and sealed in a plain envelope:

"It has occurred to me that you may fail to understand why I changed my mind so suddenly this afternoon. In case this should be so, allow me to say that I am afraid you will have to go outside the parish for custom after all. I imagine you will hardly care, after this, to take up my uncle's invitation to visit Brundon Lodge, in spite of the ingenuity with which you contrived it."

As, with a defeated expression, he deciphered this unilluminating document, a car drove up and stopped on the opposite bank, and a low, familiar voice called out his name. He quitted the cabin in time to see Iris reversing the machine.

"My aunt has sent me to ask if you would care to come along for supper at nine o'clock," came the clear tones in the silence that succeeded the shutting-off of the engine.

Utterly bewildered, Berwick passed his hand across his brow with a weary motion.

"That is exceedingly kind of her," he returned mechanically. "I should, of course, be delighted. But——"

"Then I may tell her that you will be

along?"

"Well, what—er—do you think about it yourself?" inquired Berwick, gently waving to and fro the sheet of notepaper, which he had retained.

"I think myself that I owe you a humble apology, but I hope you will be generous enough to forgive me and not leave me

with an awkward explanation to make to my aunt to account for your refusal to come."

"Say no more," rejoined Berwick

promptly: "I'll certainly come."

"Your friend, Mr. Whitstable," concluded Iris, "has since been to the house. He will be calling for you shortly to bring you along. Good-bye for the present."

"There's just one thing," remarked Berwick hastily—"about your note. I'm afraid I don't quite understand it, you

know."

"It isn't necessary to, now: I ought never to have written it. I knew all along that I must be wrong, only...Please destroy it."

"But won't you tell me what it means? If you don't, a bout of brain-fever is the

least I can expect."

The engine of the car roared suddenly and then died down into a rhythmic drone.

"If you must know—of course, you will never forgive me—examine the picture opposite the doorway inside the main sleeping-berth."

A few minutes later Berwick stood in the cubicle indicated, straining his eyes in the endeavour to read the pencilled words on what looked like a page torn from a note-He had found it held between the framework and the glass of a picture advertising a soda-water, where it had doubtless been inserted during the previous day or two by one of the two rumoured proprietors of the boat to catch the eye of the other. As to who these two gentlemen were, there was still no clue beyond an initial, but as, by the time he had made out the message, Berwick had lost any lingering desire to make their acquaintance, the unsolved problem ceased to occupy him.

"B.—Off to spend a few days with some easy money located upstream," the message ran. "Shall try and get them both back here for their revenge. Meantime, if you can break the ice with some people in the district called Maitland, we shan't need to go outside the parish for 'custom.'—H."

As the significance of this stray communication dawned upon him, Berwick heard the voice of Frederick Whitstable making the night hideous without.

"Never," he remarked, as they took their way towards Brundon Lodge, "play cards with men you don't know—especially if they initial chits with a 'b' or an 'h'." "Why not?"

"Well, it's a long story," was the reply, "but, all being well, one day you shall hear it—only from someone else. I feel sure she would tell it better than I should."

Frederick Whitstable stopped and peered

"Are you sure," he asked, "that when you dived into the river to fetch me out, you didn't knock your head on the bottom?"



THE BIRD OF THOUGHT.

STRANGE thought fluttered past me, like a bird, A rare, shy bird, with swift, elusive wings; With magic twitterings. And as it passed, the lust of capture stirred In me, to bid me set Sly springe and cunning net, And wait in ambush, holding cautious strings.

So, like a bird I caged it in bright verse, And listened for the precious notes I knew When wild and free it flew With faery flutings eager to rehearse Beauty's unending range Of ever sweet and strange-But sadly drooped my bird, its songs were few.

And one day I perceived the gilded wires Were empty. It had slipped between the bars To seek its native stars. Lifting its pale breast to those distant fires One dewy night, unknown, My captive bird had flown To fabulous boughs of Saturn or of Mars. VALENTINE FANE.



'He was astride the horse next her own, and in front of him was a little laughing bundle of rags, which he held protectively, to which he chattered. She could hear his words, gay and tender."

COME TO THE FAIR

By AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

ULLO, Fan, come to the fair," said Stapleton. Fan looked up at him: she

was a pretty girl with a colour that was like a roseleaf. She shook her head. "No," she said.

"No what?" asked Stapleton severely. "Be polite."

"No fair," said Fan, dimpling.

The dimple always did for Stapleton: a yearning to coax descended upon him. "Oh, come along, Fan," he said. "You know you love fairs, and so do I. Nobody else that I know loves them, and nobody else that you know loves them; so unless you seize this chance you will probably never go to a fair agair."

Fan coughed. "Loud applause," she said, "and the sound of tears in the gallery."

"Well, you probably won't," repeated Stapleton. "Think of it: no more roundabouts, no more stout gentlemen beating

big drums, no more painted swing-boats, no more stalls with beads and buckets, no

Fan cast aside her sewing. Really, Stapleton was a nuisance: she wished Susan hadn't let him in: she wished she had pretended to be out: she wished—oh, she wished his fair hair didn't tumble about in that ridiculously boyish fashion. She stood up, showing herself slender, gallant, graceful. "Oh, all right, I'll come," she said; "but I expect it will be for the last time."

"We'll see," murmured Stapleton.

She turned on him. "You aren't going to tell me the old, old story?"

"Not if it bores you," said Stapleton.

"Because," she went on, "I have practi-

cally made up my mind to marry Weston."
Stapleton bit his lip. His colour changed, but he only said, "I see. Well, in the meantime, come to the fair."

She went away to put her hat on.

she returned he was seated at the piano singing

"I ain't nobody's darling."

Oh, what a lad he was! Well, she was glad he was taking it so easily. The thought came to her that lithe, fair, and handsome as he was, and with those truthful eyes that could be so tender, he was safe, sooner or later, to be somebody's darling. The reflection hurt. What a pity he was so poor. Fan just couldn't marry a poor man and go on being poor: she had had enough of it. She steadied herself: she was really quite firm in her resolve to marry Weston.

She could see in his eyes that her new hat became her: she had had just the

faintest doubt.

"Lovely vision," said Stapleton; "but hadn't you better bring a wrap?—The night is cold."

night is cold."

She went away to fetch one. Oh, why did Weston never think of things like that —whether one might or might not need a wrap? But she would marry Weston: her mind was quite arranged.

They left her door and walked swiftly toward the end of the road. The night was indeed cold: Fan guessed she was going to be glad of the wrap she carried before it

was done.

She said, "Seems silly to have a fair at

this time of year."

"Oh no," said Stapleton. "Just the right time, when the evenings are dark and drear and you want some excitement."

"When you want to be frozen blue!" said Fan. "Why didn't they have it in

the summer?" She shivered.

"Difficult to fix," said Stapleton. "They might fix it for Friday and summer be on Wednesday."

Fan laughed, then she said crushingly, "I suppose you think you are being bril-

liant ? ''

"Not merely brilliant," he pleaded. "My aim is to be irresistible."

"Well, you won't 'irresist' me," said Fan, setting her jaw.

Stapleton said nothing.

"Remember your promise," said Fan, glancing at him.

Stapleton said quietly, "I remember it.

I won't bother you, Fan."

The quiet tone, so unlike his ordinary laughing gay one, got her. She had again to steady herself. She did. "Let's make up a conundrum," she suggested.

But a bus appeared which Stapleton insisted on their boarding. They climbed

to the top, sat with their heads among the stars and invented conundrums.

That proceeding, too, might prove dangerous if she allowed herself to reflect upon the charm and unusualness of it: so she didn't.

"I don't believe this fair of yours exists," said Fan at length, pulling herself up. "You invented it as an excuse for a busride."

But even as she spoke the gaudy noise of it came to her ears.

"Oh, it exists all right: no end of a do," said Stapleton. "We get off here, and cut down that corner . . ."

They did, and were soon in the midst of it all. Oh, the swing of the boats, the crack, crack, crack of the balls breaking their hearts in an attempt to know the coconuts; the heartrending gaiety of the roundabouts!

"Makes one feel as if one were a Fairy Princess," said Fan, slipping her arm within Stapleton's.

"But she," said Stapleton, "always

marries the poorest suitor."

"And he," said Fan, drawing her arm away, "turns out to be a king's son."

"Weston," said Stapleton slowly, "would fit that rôle better than I should."

Fan wasn't so sure. She said, "Let us see the Mermaid Lady. I'm sure she'll be awfully hurt if we don't pay our respects."

They turned into the tent.

"The Mermaid Lady," thought Fan, "ought to be safe enough."

They had wandered on to the coco-nut shies.

"The coco-nut," said Fan, "is a greatly over-estimated fruit."

She had had seven shies; and she and the coco-nuts were yet only distantly acquainted.

"But I am yearning for one," said Stapleton annoyingly. "Have you finished?—and not a coco-nut! Do have another try."

"No, thank you," said Fan. "If I were to shy for another hour, I wouldn't knock one of those beastly things off: I don't believe they are meant to come off: I believe they are glued on."

"Not they; they'll fall off easily enough if you hit 'em," said Stapleton. He picked

up a ball.

"Well, you hit them," said Fan. "I'll see you do it."

She felt sure he would: Stapleton was an excellent shot and had an eye that seldom erred. But he made three misses.

At the first Fan jeered. "No better than me!" she said.

At the second she said, "You're nervous."

At the third she said nothing. Was it possible that Stapleton wasn't taking it so easily after all? Poor lad. But she must marry Weston.

Stapleton had four more shies, bringing

down a coco-nut each time.

Fan breathed a sigh of relief. "Got into your stride," she said. "But,—four coconuts!"

"One for you," said Stapleton, handing it to her, "one for me"—he put it under his arm—"one for . . ." Two small ragged urchins were standing listening: one held out a hand, "One for me, mister." Stapleton gave him one, then handed the remaining coco-nut to the other little ragamuffin. Both made off without a "thank you."

"There's gratitude!" said Fan, with a glance of indignation from her blue eyes.

"Oh, I understand," said Stapleton. "They feel it's too good to be true. When fortune of that kind comes to you, you feel you want to get into a corner with it alone."

"Oh goodness!" sighed Fan.

"What's the matter? Poor kid, am I boring her?" said Stapleton.

"You keep on saying things that get

me," Fan said desperately.

This time he didn't understand: thought that she was annoyed, didn't see that she was fighting, fighting that understanding

and sympathetic quality in him.

"Let's go on the roundabouts, let's do everything," he said buoyantly. He went on, but in the same buoyant tone, "Let's celebrate. Some men, I believe, have a grand blow-out the day before they are married. Well, I want to celebrate the other thing. To-morrow I shall consider you definitely Weston's: well, to-day I want to celebrate that to-day isn't to-morrow. Understand?"

"Sounds horribly involved," said Fan.

"It is, rather—the whole thing," mused

Stapleton.

Fan felt a twinge of exasperation. She wanted to cry, "Well, you seem very cheery about it!" She said instead, "Let's go and look at that stall—the one with the painted noses hanging on it."

"Change me sixpence and I will buy you a di'mond necklace," said Stapleton.

It was somewhat later. They had been very gay: Fan now wore a scarf of a florid description with the ends hanging out:

Stapleton had a tin flower in his buttonhole. Fan shook her head. "I haven't a sou," she said.

"And the stall lady has just said that she has no coppers," said Stapleton. "Looks like a case of 'bang went sixpence."

Stapleton gazed at the di'mond necklaces. They both did: the necklaces were marked $3\frac{1}{2}d$. and hung in magnificent profusion from a rod across the stall.

"I simply must hang diamonds round your neck," said Stapleton, "even if—even if I have to lose tuppence ha'penny on the transaction."

He bought one. He had taken off his cap and stuffed it into his pocket, and his fair hair was ruffled; on his face was an expression thoughtful but whimsical. "He isn't as handsome as Weston," Fan thought, "but he's better looking." His eyes, unexpectedly of a light brown, had a queer steadfastness. They had, too, a curiously childlike quality. But his chin was a man's chin: self-controlled, perhaps a little stubborn. Fan had known him for years: she realised that she loved every line of his face: but she couldn't marry him, she simply couldn't.

"Let me hang it round your neck," said Stapleton.

Something hard scattered round Fan's neck, like drops of ice. She shivered. "Ugh, how cold!" she said.

Stapleton seemed about to say something, then changed his mood. He pushed into her hands a painted fish. "Represents the change from sixpence," he said.

Fan said in a funny voice, "A diamond necklace and a silver fish: I feel more than

ever like a Fairy Princess."

"Let's make up a song about it," suggested Stapleton in a gay tone, taking her arm and leading her from the stall.

"A diamond necklace, a silver fish,
What more could the heart of woman wish?"

"Rotten," commented Fan.

"H'm," said Stapleton with a twisted smile, "she doesn't seem to like my poetry. Well, let us say that I am the ambassador of the Fairy Prince you are to wed. He has sent me on in advance to prepare the way, to sing his praises and so forth. By me he has sent you gifts: diamonds to show that he commands the riches of the earth: a silver fish to show that he commands the rolling sea. Dear me, I seem to be playing the part rather well."

"You haven't sung the praises of the

Fairy Prince," said Fan lightly.

"Neither have I," admitted Stapleton in a tone as light as her own. "Weston's praises—for he is your Fairy Prince, isn't he-how can I best sing them? Well, certainly he is a rich and powerful prince."

"Handsome?" questioned Fan cruelly. "Rather," agreed Stapleton with enthusiasm. "I suppose Weston is one of the best-looking men about. He is a good sports-

"Nothing," said Fan, dropping the fish into her pocket. "But I am tired of this game, let's go to the roundabouts."

"I was just about to propose it," Stapleton said with a sigh of relief. "What a time

we're having, what a time!"

"Please I'm lost."

"The deuce you are!" said Stapleton.



man, too; can't think of a game he doesn't excel at. And he is a good judge of a picture. Yes, there is quite a lot to be said for Weston in the rôle of a Fairy Prince."

"Yet you don't have much to do with him, do you?" Fan said in almost an aggrieved voice.

'Oh well, he isn't my sort," said Stapleton

apologetically.

Fan gave herself a little shake.

"Anything the matter?" asked Stapleton.

little more. But she was not

attending to Fan: her interest, her information, and her prayer were to Stapleton, to whose leg she clung.
"I'm lost," she repeated disconsolately,

the ends of her mouth drooping.

"A bundle of rags," murmured Fan with a little spasm of pity.

Stapleton appeared not to notice the rags. "How much lost are you?" he questioned.

"Do you know where you live ?"

The child repeated in a parrot fashion: "No. 3 Penthony's Court, Ballerton Road, off Thigsby Road."

"I think I know the place," Stapleton said to Fan: "it isn't so far by bus. We could take her there." She nodded. To the child he said, "And what is your name, lost one?"

"Gwen," she said; and added, "Mary and Kate Broad brought me. But now I'm

lost."

"Not really," said Stapleton comfortingly. "You see, this lady and I know the way home and we'll take you there in a minute."

might be grasped. "I ain't been on the roundabouts. They're over there," she said gleefully.

"She looks half starved," Fan murmured to Stapleton. "What about some food for

her ? '

"I vote for the roundabouts first rather than last," said Stapleton; "might be safer."

Fan rode her horse blithely, the cold air singing at her ears, the colour in her cheeks deepening to a richer rose. The world of the fair seemed a laughing heart-whole world, which past swung with an air as gay and careless, but

"'I've seen him, Jim, but it doesn't matter,' she said quietly. 'When we were on the roundabouts I made up my mind. I decided to let him go.' 'So rich as he is, Fan?' Stapleton said in a queer voice."

"Better set off now," said Fan.

But Stapleton, whose gaze had been on Gwen's dirty but pathetic visage, hesitated. "Like to go on the roundabouts first?" he asked.

Gwen put out a smutty hand that it

at her heart . . . What was it that bit at her heart? She looked at Stapleton, and knew.

He was astride the horse next her own, and in front of him was a little laughing bundle of rags, which he held protectively, to which he chattered. She could hear his words, gay and tender: "Some rag, isn't it Gwen? Goodness, if we aren't in fairyland! Can't you feel this horse coming alive? What's his name? Dick, did you say? Yes, we'll have it Dick, quite a fine name for a horse. I say, isn't that a topping tune?"

The last remark was to Fan. The tune was "The Blue Moon." It was a topping tune; but somehow Fan felt that she wanted to cry. That wouldn't do at all. She looked again at Stapleton, saw his fair head bend over the child . . . Gwen was shouting riotously, "Ain't it grand? I say, ain't it grand?

"Yes, yes, it's grand," Fan cried with a catch at her voice. How tender Stapleton could be with a child, how tender . . .

The tune changed. "I ain't nobody's darling . . ."

Fan winced. The horses were slowing down. Stapleton called to her, about another ride?" She nodded.

"I loves ye," Gwen said to Stapleton. Stapleton laughed, a queer laugh that. "Then I am somebody's darling," he said whimsically. It was said in a low tone, but Fan heard.

Oddly, at that moment she realised for the first time that this absurd and delicious outing with Stapleton was likely to be the last, realised that if again he went to the fair it was unlikely to be in her company, realised that when they parted to-night it would be with the understanding that the old careless, happy—oh, how happy!—comradeship was over. Weston had given her till to-morrow to think over his offer. She had decided to accept it. That meant that Stapleton as a delightful companion went out of her life.

She sensed the loss, took it in.

Of course, she would have Weston.

But at that moment Weston-well, he didn't appeal much. She had never seen Weston with a child, but she could imagine his manner—"Run away and play." With a Gwen the manner would probably be different: "Dirty little beggar, let's hand her over to the police."

Stapleton out of her life: her thoughts went back to that: the tremendous empti-

She heard his voice, soft and gentle, "There, there, don't cry. All nice things end, Gwen, but, you see, others come along."

At that moment Fan abandoned Weston.

"I simply can't do it," she desperately

As they sprang from the roundabout shrill voices shouted.

" I seen her—Gwen-n-n!"

"Wif that genelman!"

"Wif that lidy!"

"You're found, Gwen," said Stapleton. Mary and Kate Broad proved to be bigger and older than Gwen, but quite as ragged,

quite as unclean, quite as starved in appear-They came close, each seized Gwen by the hand.

"Crafty, ain't you, you Gwen?" said the bigger of the sisters. "'Ere you goesmoochin' off to the roundabouts, worritin' lidies an' genelmen to treat you, while Kite an' me-

"Come along, let us see what we can find

to eat," said Stapleton.

There proved to be a coffee-stall that could provide also hot milk, jam roll, sandwiches. Stapleton bought lavishly; and the three children ate with a kind of passion.

"They'll be ill," Fan said, watching them;

and counselled moderation.

"Poor little wretches, let 'em tuck in,"

said Stapleton.

"I tell you they'll be ill," Fan persisted. "Look at that child Gwen-you can see her swelling." She shook Stapleton by the arm. "Don't let them have any more. There's a gingerbread stall—I saw it—tell them you'll buy them some gingerbread to take home."

"Oh, all right—I expect you know more about it than I do," said Stapleton. He addressed the trio. "Do you hear what the lady says ?—I'm to buy you gingerbread if you don't eat too much of this other stuff."

Oddly they found that they had had

enough.

To the gingerbread stall they trailed. Fan led Gwen by the hand. She felt her heart warm to the child: Gwen had taught her something; Gwen had given her knowledge of herself.

"You're his gel, I reckon," said Gwen.

When the children had gone, laden with gingerbread and toys, and supremely happy, Stapleton said in a tone just a trifle forced, "All the fun of the fair-what haven't we How much is left for us to snatch?"

Fan said nothing, hesitated. Somehow, she had had enough of gaiety: if for a moment or two they might be quiet . . .

"Perhaps you are tired," said Stapleton.

"Would you like to go home? Have you had enough of it, Fan?"

She shook her head. Going home meant a parting: that mustn't be just yet. She asked abruptly, "What have you done with your coco-nut?"

Stapleton, taken aback, looked for a moment almost sheepish, then he grew brazen, and said, "Oh, I gave it to one of those infants. By the way, where's yours?"

Fan murmured, "I seem to have been so

unoriginal."

"Oh, you did the same," said Stapleton,

and laughed.

"I'd like a balloon, a golden one," said Fan.

"Then we turn this way," said Stapleton. "There's an old woman by those steps who looks as if she had stepped out of a fairy tale: a real witch. She sells balloons."

She was indeed witchlike: withered cheeks and a thin body like a blade. "But her eyes twinkle: look at 'em," whispered Fan to Stapleton. "I mean to have her as a fairy godmother."

"I'd rather suspicion her gifts, I think,"

said Stapleton.

"Not at all," said Fan indignantly. She asked the old dame, "Do you tell fortunes, mother?"

The old crone gave her a birdlike glance. "Your fortune be in yer own hands, grasp it, missy," she said.

Fan coloured sharply, and chose her balloon.

As they turned away: "And the ambassador gave her—from the Prince—" said Stapleton, "a golden balloon: to show that he had power over the kingdom of the air."

"No," said Fan: "he gave her a balloon to tell her of his own dreams: the balloon had once lighted a castle-in-the-air——"

"A castle which he had scrapped," Stapleton said firmly. There was a short pause. He was going to keep his promise: Fan saw that: how was she to let him know that he might break it?

At that moment Stapleton broke into sudden fluent nonsense. "I say, over there there's a place where you can throw rings at nine a penny—or is it nine for sixpence?—and get a present if they catch on the right hook. The presents are gorgeous: feather-topped boxes, golliwogs as ugly as sin, painted monkeys on sticks. I want a monkey on a stick: I have a painful and secret yearning for one. I want you to win it for me, Fan. Or a golliwog to tell me that I am beautiful. Yes, I think I want a

golliwog: I'll call him Adelaide and give him my true love . . ."

But it was of no use: out of the corner of her eye Fan had seen Weston with the most impossible girl in the world: his arm was round her waist: the girl was laughing loudly.

"I've seen him, Jim, but it doesn't matter," she said quietly. "When we were on the roundabouts I made up my mind.

I decided to let him go."

"So rich as he is, Fan?" Stapleton said

in a queer voice.

"I don't want to talk pi'," Fan said, her eyes refusing to meet his; "but there seem to be other things that—that matter more."

Stapleton looked at the golden balloon. "Then it wasn't," he said softly, "a present

from the Fairy Prince?"

Fan said rashly, "None of the presents were from him. They came from the shepherd boy. He was as poor as anything, but—but—— Oh, he had other things that money cannot buy."

"Fan, I love you," Stapleton whispered. She said with shining eyes, "Yes, I know." After a moment she added, "You know how I feel about you. You know I loved you even when I thought of marrying Weston. You knew all the time."

"Yes," Stapleton said, "I knew."

After a moment he asked, "Have you fallen in love with poverty, then?"

"No," she said, making a grimace, "with you."

She threw rings; and by some accident won for him a golliwog.

"Such a sweet creature," Stapleton said as they turned away from the booth. "It will be useful. 'Bridegroom's present to bride: a golliwog.'"

"'Bride's present to bridegroom,' "began Fan, determined not to blush or be con-

fused, "'a---'"

"Just a moment, Stapleton—my congratulations."

"Thanks," said Stapleton.

The speaker was swinging past, and was gone.

"Oh goodness," cried Fan, panic-stricken, surely we don't have it written all over us!"

"That was Murphy," Stapleton said confusedly. "You don't know him, Fan. Just like him to shout out like that: he didn't notice I had a lady with me."

"But-but-" said Fan.

Stapleton said simply, "We aren't going to be poor, Fan—not very."

Fan halted, torn 'twixt tears and

laughter.

"Come on," said Stapleton, gripping her arm. "Time we went home. We must catch a bus. Listen, Fan: the Dorset Trust has bought my picture, my big picture: I heard this morning. You know what that means—"

"Oh, oh!" breathed Fan. "And you

-you never told me!"

Stapleton grinned joyously. "You had

to tell me something else first," he said. "Oh, Fan, there's our magic coach to carry us to fairyland."

Some folks thought it a bus: they were wrong.

As they ran for it, Fan's silver fish fell from her pocket. "Oh, dash you!" cried Stapleton as he stopped to find it.

They boarded the magic coach together: she with her golden balloon and he with a silver fish.



SEPTEMBER.

I SAW September on the hill:
His step was like a falling feather:
He sprang from little rill to rill
And drew their brightnesses together;
And, oh, the lovely notes he sang,
As if a hundred harebells rang.

His round mouth had a flower's surprise, His neck had ribbons fluttering after; Subtle and mischievous his eyes And his smooth cheeks' secretive laughter; And, oh, his leaping, flashing heels, Like butterflies in flights and wheels.

His form was lighter than a dream, His step was like a falling feather; He sprang from little stream to stream And leapt and sparkled in the heather; And, oh, the beauty that he shed, Far, far too fair, with Summer dead.



SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER: What is a centurion? Pupil (promptly): 'Obbs.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE S.P.R.H.

By T. Norris Treen.

SIMPKINS isn't such a bad fellow after all. True, we had a little disagreement over a matter concerning the hedge which divides our two gardens, but that is over and done with . . . and, as I said before, I do not bear malice; whilst as for Simpkins, he plays a topping game of bezique. In fact, I can only just beat him nowadays.

Quite an interesting raconteur he is as well. We were talking the other night (the two feminine members were discussing the topic of "lingerie"), and I was just pocketing an easily-earned shilling, when he said suddenly, "I never told you about the S.P.R.H., did I?"

I agreed.

"The S.P.R.H.," he went on slowly, "lived, and flourished, and died some time before you came to reside at Dollars Hill, and although a few mourned its departure, many rejoiced . . . some secretly, some openly; but only one, I think, was really sorry.

"It was started by a Mrs. Outfaugh Blood, who was a ruling spirit around here. Not, I suppose, a bad woman, but she did throw her weight about a lot, and when anyone weighs sixteen stone, y'know . . .

"Very fond of the Russian authors she was. Tolstoi, and Andreyev, and all those Johnnies. Caught on like the dickens . . . like most new stunts in this district. Debating and literary societies were formed. Book clubs established. . . . And then Mrs. Outfaugh Blood conceived the idea of forming the Society for the Propagation of Russian Habits.

"Then Dollars Hill went mad. Gloom was paramount, and the women dressed in those ugly arty clothes, such as may still be seen in Chelsea. 'The Limes,' 'The Laurels,' 'The Love Nest,' and 'Hill Crest' disappeared, and in their place came 'Vishni Volochok,' 'Pskof,' 'Sergievsk,' and 'Mohilkof,' and many others.

"Practically all the women succumbed to the craze, and many of the men as well. Jones, who used to be quite a jolly fellow, became

affected. Started living on potatoes and brown bread . . . nearest he could get to black.

"One Sunday morning I went to fetch Brown for a round of golf, but he said that he was not playing any more. 'There is,' he said, 'something innately cruel about golf... the ball so resembled the soul; so cruelly hit across the pastures of Life... and think,' he added, 'of the little blades of grass.' At the conclusion of this he burst into bitter sobs.

"Truly the effect of Tchekov upon the human system is weird and wonderful, and the limit was reached when the postman asked me one morning, with tears in his eyes, if I knew where the Smiths had gone, because he had a letter address to 'Nijni Novgorod.'

"It was then that the Russian author, Andrie-

Simpkins was quiet. He looked meditatively at the ceiling.

"So am I," he said.

&&&

THE PERFECT PICNIC.

IT was a perfect picnic.

We were well hidden from the curious eyes of any passers-by in a sheltered spot that seemed to have been made for us, so delightful it was.

The wind missed us nicely. No flies and no dust annoyed us.

The sandwiches were uncrushed, the eggs unbroken and the tea just right.

I had never enjoyed a picnic so much in my life and the children were delighted that it had been possible to have a picnic after all.



BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

OPTIMISTIC BATHER (remembering wife's letters): Hi !-don't forget to post the letters you'll find in the inside pocket!

vski, came down to lecture the Society on Russian Customs, and broke the bubble of Mrs. Outfaugh Blood's reputation. That was a bitter day for her. After he had gone, 'Vishni Volochok,' 'Pskof,' 'Sergievsk,' and 'Mohilkof' disappeared, and in their place came again 'The Limes,' 'The Laurels,' 'The Love Nest,' and 'Hill Crest,' and the postman was happy once more."

Simpkins stopped, and gazed thoughtfully at nothing.

"What happened?" I queried.

"Andrievski told them that his name was not a Russian one, but English . . . Albert Noggs, to be precise."

"But . . . but," I cried, "that is not true. Andrievski is a genuine Russian. He was born there. I know that because I am a personal friend of his."

We sat on cushions on the nursery floor. Outside in the garden it was still raining like

A small girl, with her mother, was watching two men at work in the hall of a public building. The men were kneeling on the floor and repairing the mosaic with minute pieces of coloured stone, carefully fitting them together in a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. It was a business the child understood perfectly.

After two or three minutes one of the men lifted a small piece of stone that was not quite the right size, placed it on a small block, and began to chip the edge. The child was astonished at such a breach of the rules of the game.

"Oh, mummy, look!" she cried. "He's cheating!"

A FALSE STEP. By T. Hodgkinson.

Until we heard that he had purchased "a little place in the country" I cannot honestly say that I was interested in Amelia's brother Herbert.

I had met him, of course, in the days of our engagement, when she was taking me round to exhibit her find to her relations, but there

were so many of them, and I have yet to learn that the captive in a Roman triumph was interested in the individuals who made up the gloating crowd lining the route.

He was probably at the wedding, too. I seem to recall an epergne that answers to his name, but, once the ceremony was over, he did not trouble us with visits, nor we him. The news of his acquisition of a country residence, however, altered all

One cannot recline in a hammock and remain indifferent to the owner of the trees to which it is attached, and I have a positive passion for reclining in hammocks. A few vards of string and a jazz cushion are my spiritual home. Not, of course, that I was quite so candid about my designs on Herbert when Amelia first passed the news on to me.

"Good man,"

was the actual form my comment took.

"He was always fond of gardening," she reminded me. "He once took a prize for the best decorated window-box. He'll have more scope now."

It was not until the arrival of Herbert's answer to our letter of congratulation and our offer to lend him a book about herbaceous borders that we learned whether his "little place" was such as required a retinue of outdoor servants, or could be run with a lawn-mower and

a couple of gardening papers; but the latter proved to be the case.

There was much to be done, Herbert added, before the herbaceous border stage was reached. The present garden of his cottage was microscopic, and his first task would be to bring under cultivation enough of the adjoining meadow to make a pleasaunce worthy of the name. But, he concluded, we must come down for a week-end



LOOKING AHEAD.

Husband (trying to make the kettle boil for afternoon tea): 'Er—you'd better go to bed, dear, I'll bring you an early morning cup of tea.

and see for ourselves all he was doing as soon as it began to look ship-shape.

"We must show a proper admiration for all he has done," I told Amelia when in due course the invitation arrived.

"I'll try," she promised, "but I cannot undertake to recognise every plant."

"Just stick to those you know," I advised her, and she began rehearing at once.

"What a lovely aspidistra," she said. "Was the pot included in the price?"

"That's the idea," I said. "You can also remark upon the gooseberries. They're the things that are all whiskers and prickles.'

"Just like father," Amelia remarked, and we left it at that.

There was plenty to see at Herbert's little place. His attempts to alter the landscape had been on a grandiose scale, if not so successful as he seemed to imagine. We were introduced to each root and seedling personally, and in every case managed to produce the appropriate comment. It was not until the tour was practically completed that the contretemps occurred.

"And this," said Herbert proudly, "will be the tennis lawn," and he called our attention of an adequate harvest from his first sowing of grass seed?



The owner of a racing car was driving along a country road when he overtook an old man and, being of a kindly disposition, offered him a

His passenger was tremendously impressed by the speed and luxury of the car, and to humour the old fellow the driver stepped on the accelerator until they were travelling at about sixty miles an hour.

Suddenly, however, they came upon a greasy patch of road; the car skidded and crashed into a tree. By good luck neither was injured. The old man pulled himself out of the ruins,

THE STANDARD OF COMPARISON.

VISITOR: How's that pretty girl you are engaged to? VERY MODERN ARTIST: Oh, she's chucked me. I told her the other day she was as pretty as a picture and she hasn't spoken to me since.

to a carefully flattened terrain, in which, despite his care, a little green still showed here and there.

It was Amelia's opportunity. Ever since she won an egg-stand and had her name in the local paper, tennis courts are something she does understand, and at once her comment came pat.

"A hard court!" she exclaimed. "How extravagant! When are they coming to put on the final dressing?"

And that is why once again I am not interested in Amelia's brother Herbert. From that moment his manner changed, and all prospect of a repeat invitation vanished into the remote distance.

But how on earth was Amelia to know that those stray patches of green were Herbert's idea

filled his pipe and then remarked, thoughtfully, "That sartinly was fine, sir, but there's one thing that baffles me. How do you stop her when there ain't no trees about?"



A young artist of doubtful talent was visited by a wealthy business man. After looking at a number of pictures the business man said:

"Young man, do you sell many of these pictures ?"

"Yes," the artist replied, untruthfully, think-

ing that at last he was about to sell a picture. "Well," said the business man, "if you will come to my office to-morrow I will give you a well-paid job. I have been looking for a salesman like you for years."

THE FIRST IMPRESSION.

"First impressions are so important," said Mary earnestly.

"That's what the criminal said when asking if he could have his finger-prints taken with his gloves on," I told her, without, however, diverting her mind from the question under discussion.

This question was the need for a certain amount of new furniture and the renovation of the old before the move into our new house.

Mary has social ambitions, and the move into an entirely new neighbourhood was, she felt, a golden opportunity of realising them. And if she fancied that an appearance of affluence in the number and quality of our worldly possessions would help her in this, she is not the first person to have the same idea.

"Nobody knows us in Somerville, and we shall be judged by our furniture," she said, and then

proceeded to lower the whole tone of the discussion by remarking "some 'opes" when I expressed a wish to be loved for myself alone. Not, of course, that she lowered it far enough to enable me to escape the cost of the new goods.

It is not certain that the sight of our new goods being carried into "The Nook" really excited the populace of Somerville, but, at any rate, apparently they did not create an unfavourable impression. People began to call on us as soon as we were straight.

"That only shows you how right I was," declared Mary; but, though I am old enough to know better, I could not refrain from pointing out that our first caller, however cleverly she might disguise her visit as a social civility, had really come to sell something.

"If only we had put up a No-Hawkers, No-Circulars notice this

would not have happened," I deplored when I got home and found two tickets for one of Somerville's Select Subscription Dances adorning the mantelpiece.

"Nonsense," said Mary sharply. "She didn't hawk and she wasn't circular. She only came to call."

"And remained to prey (Goldsmith)," I retorted. "Did you have to pay spot cash?"

Whether this was compulsory or not, it appeared that she had paid, and was looking to me for the renovation of the housekeeping purse.

Nor was this the worst. There was the burning question of what she was to wear on the important occasion of our debut in the social world of Somerville.

"First impressions are so important," she said



A DOUBTFUL COMPLIMENT.

ARDENT ADMIRER: Is it true that you think out all your beautiful poems in your bath?

UNKEMPT-LOOKING POET: That is so, madam. ARDENT ADMIRER: Really, it seems incredible!

equally new to Somerville, seeing that we were as yet perfect strangers in the place.

"Those rags," Mary interjected.

I spoke approvingly of the pink which had had such a success at the last whist drive in the old home, and mentioned the mauve that had made her the belle of the local White Mouse and Fancy Rodent Club's soirée last autumn.

"Those rags," said Mary again, and went on to add that she would never be able to hold up her head again if she appeared with a last year's waistline.

I had always understood that the waistline fluctuated, but the idea that it ever interfered with the muscles of the neck was new to me. However, the upshot of the matter was that the new dress had to be procured.

It was a dream of a dress at a nightmare of a price. Even Mary admitted that she had paid rather more than was really justified, but, as she said, Somerville society would judge her by it, and first impressions were so important. I seemed to remember having heard the remark before.

"It's worth every penny of the price," she went on. "Look, it is actually signed by its designer. That's the very latest idea." And she showed me the signature. A graphologist would, I thought, deduce from the writing c pronounced aptitude for daylight robbery.

Still, it really was a magnificent dress, andan important point in connection with the first impression it was intended to produce—it looked affluent. But I could not help wondering if on the whole it was not too magnificent for the occasion. Somerville is not an important place, and I suspected that the vagaries of fashion did not move it so much or so soon as Mary imagined.

But even I was not prepared for the tragedy that occurred. Our social career in Somerville has been blighted at the start. Mary's new dress created a first impression all right, but it was only while I was waiting in the vestibule of the Town Hall for her to descend from the cloakroom that I heard exactly what that impression

"Oh yes," I heard one matronly lady telling another, "it was a wonderful dress, though rather ostentatious; but, do you know, dear, it wasn't her own. There was actually someone else's name written on it."

"Really?" said the other, and added pleasantly, "Not quite the sort of people one wants to know, are they?"

I have not yet had the courage to tell Mary.



LOOK BEFORE YOU-DIVE!

Into the green translucent wave I dived-from work and worry free; And, being muscular and brave, Swam strongly out to sea.

Nor could they share my vivid joy Who bob and splutter at the rim. By law, methought, each girl and boy Should be compelled to swim.

Turning upon my back, supine, I felt, beyond all others, blest, That, effortless, I could recline On Neptune's briny breast.

Supported by each swell, I lay And gazed serenely at the sky, Watching the sea-guils wheel and play-None more at home than I.

Next, rolling over on my side To take a long and lazy stroke, I raised my arm. Then rapture died-My radiant bubble broke.

Gloom brooded o'er the turquoise round, The golden radiance had gone. For,-when I raised my arm, I found I'd left my wrist-watch on! Jessie Pope.

요성관

A GOLFER was practising mashie shots in his garden.

"It isn't too easy," he explained to a friend. "I take a lot of pains to get the shot just right." With that he put down another ball and addressed it carefully. There was an awful crash and the dining-room window was shattered.

"You took considerable panes with that one!" remarked the watching friend.



Brown: That fellow Robinson must live in a very small flat!

JONES: What makes you think that? Brown: Don't you notice how his dog wags its tail up and down instead of sideways.

"I WANT my daughter to enjoy some kind of artistic education," said the father who had recently made his fortune. "I think I'll let her study singing."

"Why not art or literature?" suggested a friend.

Art spoils canvas and literature wastes reams of paper. Singing merely produces a temporary disturbance of the atmosphere."

JACK: So your father objected at first because he didn't want to lose you?

ETHEL: "Yes, but I won his consent. I told him that he need not lose me; we would live with him, and so he would not only have me but a son-in-law to boot."

Jack: H'm! I don't like that expression "to boot."



SHE listened as he talked.

"I am rich," he said. "If you marry me, my money, my motor cars, my yacht, everything will be yours."

"How lovely!" she exclaimed. Then her brow clouded. "But what will you do?" she asked.

Two friends went to see a billiard match between well-known professionals. After the match had been in progress for a while Joe turned to his friend and said:

"What do you call this game, Fred?" Fred replied: "Billiards."

Joe watched a few more strokes, and then said: "Well, what do they call the game we play at home."



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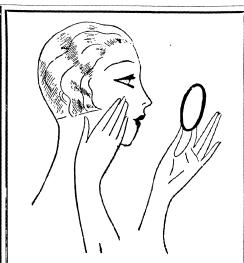
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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

THE MOST UNKINDEST CUT.

A traveller informs us that lions take to man-eating when they are too old to overcome the agility of the antelope and the fighting powers of the zebra.

This is indeed a blow (or slog)
Bestowed upon the foolish fancies
That made me deem a sportsman's log
Superior to all romances,
And murmur "though it lacks a plot,
Worthy of my approving seal is
This book wherein he tells us what
He did to Leo Felis."

Not that the *hunter's* charm has fled;
'Tis not for *his* repute I'm sorry;
The jungle's lord, when all is said,
Remains the sportsman's noblest quarry;

HAROLD: At last I've found the person I love best in all the world! Tall and slender, big brown eyes, a wonderful smile, beautiful hair, and dimples!

HORACE: Nonsense, old chap. You haven't dimples!



"Who's that man with the flowing whiskers?"

"Oh, that's Monsieur Cutti, the celebrated ladies' hairdresser. He's so busy shingling and waving he never gets time to shave himself."



"Now, Georgie, don't run away! Stay here till I get some water."

But, seeing all the risks they ran Who sought him in his own dominion, I'd hoped the lion held of Man A similar opinion.

Surely the boldest of his breed,
Whose massive might showed no declining,
Alone was conscious of a need
For human provender when dining;
Such was the notion that I got,
Reading how Nimrod (plus his beaters)
Accounted in the bag they shot
For several man-eaters.

But I was wrong, I'm told, to dream
That Leo when his hunger pricked him
Was led by any high esteem
To make towards a human victim;
The prey with which he goes to cope
Cuts in his view a sorry figure,
Less agile than an antelope,
Lacking a zebra's vigour.

Theta.

FATHER: Don't be so dumb—you must learn your spelling!

Son: How can I—when the teacher is all the time changin' the words?



CONDUCTOR: All out. End of the line. FOND MOTHER: Oh, dear, we shall have to ride back. Baby thinks you have such a funny face.



GENIAL MILKMAN: Looks like rain. LADY OF THE HOUSE: Yes, it usually does, but it has a faint flavour of milk.



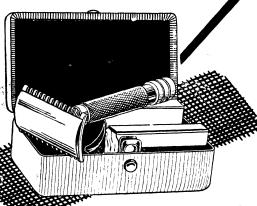
Uncle: And how do you like school, my little man?

NEPHEW: Closed.

THE OCTOBER WINDS () R



EDEN PHILLPOTTS : E.M. DELAFIELD BARRY PAIN : O. MADOX HUEFFER



FREE

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The proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap will be pleased to send to any applicant upon receipt of 36 outside printed wrappers from tablets of Wright's Coal Tar Soap and 12 flaps from the boxes (as shown below), this handsome razor set, consisting of heavily nickel plated case, safety razor, two nickel-cased razor blade containers with two Horton British Sheffield blades. The whole case is lined with purple plush and is really an exceptional gift.

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AN EARLY AUTUMN STUDY IN THE NEW FOREST.

From a photograph by Judges', Limited, Hastings.



"Margaret Westover was sitting alone in the beautiful drawing-room of her beautiful home, day-dreaming."

UNFOUNDED THANKSGIVINGS

By ELLEN THORNEYCROFT FOWLER

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK WILES

'ARGARET WESTOVER was sitting alone in the beautiful drawingroom of her beautiful home, daydreaming. She was growing old, but she did not feel any older than she did forty years ago; she merely felt considerably wiser, and far more prone to see the funny side of things. She had lived in the same house for nearly seventy years—for the whole of her life, in fact: it had been the cradle of her young woman's visions and of her old woman's dreams. She had lived in it and loved it for so long that it seemed somehow to have become part of herself. People who visited her in her own house felt that its beauty had brought out the beauty of her character; and that the exquisite proportions of its Georgian rooms had developed the sense of proportion of its gracious mistress.

Surely there is often a similarity between

the inhabitants of a house and the house itself: we must all have noticed this fact: but whether the house influences the dwelle: 3 therein, or the dwellers influence the house, who can say? Wisdom and peace were the prevailing characteristics of Margaret Westover: wisdom and peace were combined to form the atmosphere of the old Manor House.

As she sat alone by the fire on that cold spring afternoon, Margaret thought about her own youth long past. A young kinswoman of hers—Joyce Westover—had just become engaged to be married; and she and her fiancé were staying at the Manor. The sight of their love and happiness brought forcibly back to Margaret's mind the thought of her own youth and its undying romance; and the fact that Joyce's George belonged to the same family as her own Rupert, and was exactly like what Rupert used to be in

the days of her own engagement more than forty years ago, made those old happy days almost return. George's grandmother—dead now these twenty years—had been Rupert's sister and her own dearest friend; and when Margaret looked at George's handsome face, transfigured with love and happiness, she seemed to see once more the lover of her youth.

As she sat by the fire she recalled the joy of those far-off, blissful days; and remembered how handsome and soldierly Rupert was-and how perfect she thought himand how she believed she was the luckiest girl in the world to have for a lover so very perfect and gentle a knight. She was an only child—the daughter of rich people who had married late in life—and she had but few companions of her own age, until she met and made friends with Rupert's sister, Alice; and, later, with the brilliant Rupert himself, who at once fulfilled all her girlish dreams, and became the one romance of her life. Margaret's face grew tender as she lived over again those gloriously youthful and romantic days.

Then her face became grave as she recalled her anguish at parting with Rupert when his regiment was ordered to India; and her rebellious feelings against her parents because they refused to allow her to be married until she was twenty-one: and her eyes became misty—even after all those years—as she remembered a terrible hour when her light was turned into darkness and her day into night by the receipt of a telegram from Rupert's people, telling her that they had just heard the report of his death in a skirmish on the frontier.

How she managed to live through that time she could not imagine. Yet she had lived through it, as people so often succeed in doing when life appears intolerable and unendurable: she had even lived to be an old woman, and to see her idyll repeated by George and Joyce, with a gladness and ardour that equalled hers and Rupert's.

Then Margaret turned from the memory of those sorrowful days, when her life seemed to be ended by one stroke; and she pictured herself growing older and more contented in the house where she was born, until the peace of middle-age descended upon her and her youth was over. Then she beheld the vision of herself, after the death of her parents, quite alone in the old Manor House: yet not alone, because the thought of Rupert was always with her; and she knew that no woman, who has experienced a perfect

love, can ever be really lonely. The woman who marries her lover and transforms him into a husband, may gain in comfort and everyday happiness; but she loses a great deal of the romance of life: whilst the spinster who has the cup of bliss snatched from her lips before she has drained the magic goblet, is enveloped by love's glamour for the rest of her days. To her, the lover of her choice is always young-always wonderful: the intimacy of marriage has never had the chance of overthrowing her idol, or even of exposing his feet of clay. Margaret smiled to herself as she contrasted the respective lots of the romantic spinster and the practical matron; and wondered which of the twain was really the happier.

"Each has her compensations," she thought to herself; "for life is full of compensations, if only people have the sense to

look for them."

Suddenly her day-dream was interrupted by the entrance into her drawing-room of an elderly and peppery old Colonel, whose mere presence dissipated the atmosphere of restfulness in the twinkling of an eye. He was a tall and soldierly old man, with the remains of considerable good looks: but there was no doubt that he was terribly fidgety, and that at this particular moment he was indulging in a perfect ecstasy of fuss.

"My dear, my dear, what do you think?" he began as soon as the door closed behind him: "those young people are late for tea again, a quarter of an hour late! And yet I made it quite clear to them how much annoyed I was when they were late for tea yesterday. At least, I endeavoured to do so. Don't you think I did make my displeasure plain to them, Margaret?"

"Quite plain; abundantly so. A blind man could hardly have missed seeing it," replied Margaret with her sweet smile.

"I thought so. Yet they are just as late to-day: as late as if I had never spoken about it. Oh dear, oh dear! I do detest unpunctuality."

The mistress of the house sat unruffled in the midst of this tornado. "After all, it is only tea that they are late for; and surely afternoon-tea is one of the most movable of feasts."

"It isn't the meal, but it is the principle of the thing that I object to. I hate unpunctuality in any shape or form, for tea or dinner or anything else. Somebody—I forget exactly who—said that punctuality is the courtesy of kings: and, 'pon my soul, the fellow was right!"

"But there is no king coming to tea to-day, my dearest: if there were, I am sure that George and Joyce would have been back in time for him."

"That is a mere quibble, Margaret, and you know it is. You are always taking the young people's part against me. You did it with your children, and you are doing it with your grandchildren, and yet you know how all this carelessness and irresponsibility upsets me."

"I know it does, Rupert: that is why I wish you wouldn't allow yourself to be upset. It does the children no good: they take no notice of it at all: and it does you positive harm; and me, too, as whatever hurts you

hurts me."

Colonel Westover was slightly mollified: like a restive horse he always slowed down when he felt his wife's hand upon the rein. Still he continued to grumble, but in a lower tone: "And George calls himself a soldier, I suppose."

"Certainly he does, as he has every right

to do. He is a soldier."

"Then, my dear, I ask you, what right has a soldier to be unpunctual? None at all. There is no place for unpunctuality on the battle-field."

At this Mrs. Westover laughed: "But the tea-table is not a battle-field, Rupert: at least not unless you make it so."

Colonel Westover walked to the window and looked out across the park. "Not a sign of them, Margaret; not a sign! And yet it is ten minutes to five instead of halfpast four." Then he came back to the fire and stood with his back to it: "I cannot tell what the present generation is coming to; I cannot, indeed. What with their bobbed hair, and plus-fours, and general carelessness and irresponsibility, goodness knows what will be the end of it! So different from what it was in our young days, my love; so very different!"

Mrs. Westover put out her hand and touched the bell. "I will ring for tea now. I shan't wait for the children any longer."

"I should think you wouldn't, my dear. We have waited too long as it is."

"Please bring in tea now," said Mrs. Westover to the butler who answered the bell. Then she smiled encouragingly at her irritated spouse: "Well, dearest?"

He responded at once to her spur: "George may be poor Alice's grandson, but he has nothing of a Westover about him: nobody would imagine he was any relation of mine, and I thank Heaven that I was

never like that. Just remember what I was at his age!"

Margaret was remembering; and remembering most vividly: but she said nothing, merely nodding her head in acquiescence. Like most married women she had learned that there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence.

"When I was George's age," the Colonel continued, "I realised that 'life is real, life is earnest,' and I behaved accordingly. There was nothing careless or irresponsible about me: life was too serious for that: 'pon

my soul it was!"

"Life is always real and generally amusing," remarked Mrs. Westover as the tea came in, and was duly set out. "And here are the children as well as the tea," she added, as a car rattled up to the door; and the hall was suddenly filled with young voices and gay laughter.

"Here we are at last, Grannie," cried Joyce, bounding into the room like a young hart upon the mountains. "The car has been so tiresome that we thought we should

never get home at all."

"Nearly half an hour late, as usual!" exclaimed the Colonel, showing signs of becoming restive again.

But Joyce was quite as calm as her grandmother. "I know, Gramps, and I am telling you it was the old car's fault. I'm so glad tea is ready, as I am simply dying for it."

The Colonel continued to mutter like a thunderstorm that has just passed over, but may return at any time: "Ready? I should think it is. Been ready this half-hour or more—or ought to have been," he added, remembering that it had only just come in

Here George came in looking as rosy and merry as Joyce, who greeted him with a wink, which her grandfather did not see, but which her grandmother did. "Nearly half an hour late—as usual," she remarked, with a very fair imitation of the grandfatherly manner.

"I'm so awfully sorry, sir," replied George, sitting down to his tea: "but it was that blighter of a car. Couldn't get her to go at any price; and as soon as I did, she stopped again in half a tick."

"As far as I can make out, cars are far more wilful than horses ever were," said

Margaret, pouring out the tea.

"Unpunctuality——" began the Colonel; but his granddaughter cut him short:

"I know what you're going to say, Gramps; that unpunctuality is the courtesy

of kings, or words to that effect: but I bet that if all the crowned heads in Europe had put themselves together, that car would have been too many for them."

"Then did you and George put your heads together?" asked Mrs. Westover. "I expect that is why the stoppages lasted

so long."

Joyce gave her grandmother's shoulder an encouraging pat. "Good for you, Grannie: very neatly put. But I do think it is absurd to make such a fuss about time, Gramps: it is a regular man's fuss. Women never bother about such a trifle. But you'll find that to every normal man the most important event in the B.B.C. programme is the time-signal from Greenwich. Women listen calmly to the concerts and the newsbulletins and the S.O.S.s: but men, poor dears! sit breathless on the edges of their chairs, with their watches in their

hands, in mortal dread lest they should miss a single tick of the half-dozen: and when the time-

signal is over they subside exhausted with the tension. They are creatures!" odd Then Miss Westturned over the attention to satisfying of her hunger, and was temporarily lost to the world.

"I was just remarking to your grand-mother," said

I was young from what they are now: very different indeed!"

"I feel sure you were," replied Joyce with



Colonel Westover after a pause, whilst the young people gave a quarter of their attention to him and the rest to their tea, "that things were very different when her mouth full of bread-and-jam; "and equally sure that Grannie didn't contradict you. She never does."

"Of course she doesn't: why should she?

thing as that! But of course they'd never

dream of making such asses of themselves. Still, darling, I think that you and Gramps

were to blame for listening to such nonsense.

Giving way to parents, simply makes them

world is coming to!" exclaimed the poor old Colonel, shaken to his very foundations

"'Pon my word, I don't know what the

worse. I often noticed it.'

She and I always think alike: that is why ours has been such a successful marriage: we have always been one in mind as well as one in heart."

Joyce laughed. "Grannie isn't as simple as she looks, are you, Grannie?"

"I don't know how simple I look; so how can I tell?"

"Your grandmother isn't simple at all,

Joyce: she is a very sensible as well as a very attractive woman: and I am proud to think that I have taught her many things during the long and happy years of our married life."

Mrs. Westover's blue eyes twinkled. "Yes, you have, Rupert: many,

many things."

"But though I consider that the days when we were young were better days than these, I do not mean that they were easier days: far from it. Do you remember, my love, how disturbed we were because

we were considered too young to marry when I

first went out to India?"

FRANK
WYES

"'I know what you're going to say, Gramps; that unpunctuality is the courtesy of kings, or words to that effect: but I bet that if all the crowned heads in Europe had put themselves together, that car would have been too many for them.'"

"Of course I do, my dearest. I was thinking about it only this afternoon."

"Who considered you were too young to

marry?" inquired Joyce.

"Our respective parents," replied her

grandmother.

"Why, what business was it of theirs, I should like to know? I should jolly well like to see my parents interfering in such a

by such flat heresy. "What about the fifth Commandment, young lady?"

"Well, what about it? It's no good asking me because I never can sort the Commandments. Perhaps George can. Can you tell me which the fifth is, Georgie?" asked Joyce, with a wicked look at her fiancé.

But he was too wise to be drawn into the fray. "Don't be a silly ass, darling: you

know well enough: it's the father-andmother one. Still," he added, turning deferentially to his irate host, "although we don't show it quite in the same way as you did when you were young, Uncle Rupert, we still think a jolly lot of our parents: when I want a chunk of advice from a thoroughly sensible fellow who knows the ins and outs of everything, give me my pater every time." After which misguided attempt to make the amende honorable, George asked "if he might get down," and hurried off to attend to the inner workings of his erring car.

Seeing that her poor husband was as much staggered by George's well-meant comfort as by Joyce's ill-intentioned impudence, Margaret felt it was time for her to put in her oar. "Just before you came in, Rupert, I was dreaming about our young days, and remembering what good—and bad times we used to have." (She knew that the lure of reminiscence would never fail to draw her Rupert.)

"So we did, my love, so we did; a precious sight both better and worse than the young people of the present day have! I say, do you remember that dreadful affair when I was reported as killed in a frontier skirmish; and it was several days before you heard that I was alive after all?"

"Of course I remember it, my dearest: as if it were the sort of thing I could ever forget! I often wonder how I lived through those days before I heard that the report was false and that you were still alive.

"Yes, yes, my love: it was a rough time

for you."
"I was also thinking about what would have happened if the report had been true," Margaret continued; "and what sort of an old maid I should have been."

Here Joyce intervened again. "You wouldn't have been an old maid, Grannie: trust the men for that."

"Of course she wouldn't," agreed the Colonel: "even then, young as she was, she had several suitors only too ready to cut me out. She was a deuced attractive girl, I can tell you—just as she is a deuced attractive woman!"

"You are both very complimentary," said Margaret with a smile: "but I think I should have been an old maid, all the same."

The Colonel preened himself. "I don't think you could have got along without me, Margaret; I really don't."

"I should have had to, but I shouldn't have liked it," replied Margaret, stretching out her hand to her husband. Then she added with a laugh, "I'd rather have you as you are, my dearest, than not at all.

Rupert took the thin white hand and pressed it fondly: "Well, you are bound to have me as I am, my darling, or not at all; you can't very well have me as I am not; though I'm an old man now, I admit, and not what I was."

"And I am an old woman, if you come to

"You'll never be old to me, my love: to me you will always be the lovely girl I fell in love with over forty years ago."

"Don't mind me," exclaimed Joyce: "if you want to smooze, get on with it: it's no change to me. Bless you, my children, pray make the best of love's young dream!"

Her grandfather laughed: "Impertinent child! Well, I'm off," he added, rising from the table. "I'll go and see if I can help George with that car. I know a good deal about machinery, and I'm afraid that, left to himself, he may be a little too careless with it. I've always been good at mechanics ever since I was a boy."

As he left the room Joyce murmured, And have you been good at motor-cars ever since you were a boy?" But fortun-

ately he did not hear her.

"Oh! Grannie, isn't he awful?" she exclaimed, helping herself to a fresh instalment of strawberry jam. "I can't imagine how you've put up with him all these years.'

"I've enjoyed it, positively enjoyed it," replied Mrs. Westover; "and I've found it awfully amusing, too," she added. "I've hardly had a dull moment."

"That's because you've got such an

angelic disposition, dearie."

"It isn't; it's because I've got such a strong sense of humour. And also because I fell as violently in love as you have done, when I was your age."

"Well, how you could ever have fallen in love with that pompous old fuss-pot, beats

me."

"Don't make rude remarks about your grandfather, Joyce, it is very bad behaviour."

"Don't be stuffy and stodgy, pet," retorted Joyce: "the fact that he is my grandfather makes no difference to me; how could it? I've long ago outgrown the family fetish. I don't love you because you're my grandmother, ducky: I adore you because you are one of the most attractive people I have ever met."

"Then, if you have such a high opinion of me, don't make rude remarks about my husband; it is very bad form. Put it that

way if you like."

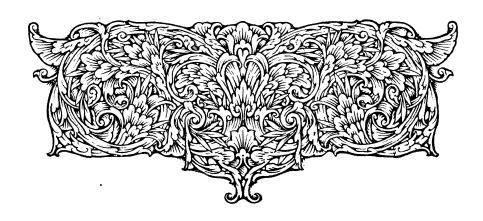
"Darling, how smart of you! You always have an answer ready," exclaimed Joyce, laying a sunburnt hand upon her grandmother's white one. Then she added with a bubble of laughter: "Think of good old Georgie being helped with his car by grandfather! The poor pet will never get it put right before dinner-time, and then he'll be late again—as usual—and we shall have all the fat in the midst of the fire once more."

Margaret smiled, but she did not speak. "Nothing that you can say," continued Joyce, "will ever shake me in my belief that you were a perfect angel to fall in love with that tiresome old man."

"He wasn't an old man when I fell in love with him; and I wasn't an angel, or else I couldn't have fallen in love. Angels never fall in love, you know: only ordinary women, such as you and I."

"Oh! I'm in love right enough: I can give you points in that. But then you must remember it's a jolly sight easier to fall in love with George than with Grandfather. Isn't it a mercy that though Georgie is Gramps' great-nephew, he isn't a bit like him? I never cease to thank Heaven for that!"

Then Mrs. Westover laughed outright. "Oh! my dear, how killingly funny you all are! You thank Heaven that George isn't like your grandfather; and your grandfather thanks Heaven that he isn't like George; and I can assure you that these are both utterly unfounded thanksgivings; for—allowing for the difference of age, which is merely a superficial difference—your George and my Rupert are as like each other as two peas."



PORTENT.

LET us now plumb red heart's proud fortitude
And drag unbounded bravery to light.
There should be no dismay, no little crude
Sad wringing of the hands before the night.
When any dies, my Dear, and folk perceive
That nothing shall avail but it must be,
They who stand in his chamber do not grieve,
They bear themselves in vast placidity.
"Hush!" say they to each other, "lest our cries
Should hinder this dear spirit on its way."
But their hearts break. And after when he lies
Great scalding tears will unction the poor clay.
And then they bring white flowers . . . O my Dear,
How sad your garden lilies smell from here!

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

LAWN TENNIS DEVELOPMENTS

BETWEEN THE FIRST ALL-ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1877 AND THIS YEAR'S JUBILEE

By A. E. BEAMISH

The former Davis Cup Player and British Olympic Games Representative.

N this Jubilee year of the All-England Championships it is interesting to look back on the great developments which have marked the gradual evolution of Lawn Tennis from the short-lived "Sphairistike" and its predecessors of far more ancient lineage into the strenuous and scientific game of to-day.

The first All-England Championships were held in 1877. Mr. Spencer Gore emerged the victor. His service was of the underhand variety, and his tactics such as to keep the other man on the run by means of delicate wrist shots directed to the corners of the

court

It must be confessed that in the days of the first champions lawn tennis was not a success in a spectacular sense. This is not surprising. The methods of play were monotonous and stereotyped. There was little or no imagination in the tactics, since there appeared to be only two strokes—a forehand and backhand drive—by which a point could be won. Frequently the ball would be hit across the net as many as fifty or sixty times in the course of a rally, the same strokes being employed in sequence to accomplish this feat.

One can easily imagine that lawn tennis might in these circumstances have died almost at its birth. It was saved from this untimely fate by the inventive powers of two men, William and Ernest Renshaw, who introduced a hitherto untried method

of play.

Up to this time, a player had been content to execute his drives from the back of

the court well behind the base-line, probably off a ball which had begun to drop after its first bounce. This meant that the striker was a long way behind his baseline when he played the ball, striking it when very near the ground with a kind of lifting drive. Renshaw thought that by advancing into the court to a spot just behind his own service-line—a spot absolutely taboo to-day to the good volleyer he could intercept and cut off these drives, however hard or truly hit by his opponent, and, by delicate volleying, place them to the corners of the court of his adversary, who had very little time in which to recover position after he had made his shot.

When the base-line player essayed to lob instead of "passing" his opponent, these two great players, the Renshaw twins, then brought off their shot by which they have been known to posterity—I mean the Renshaw smash, which may be considered the direct outcome of this new method of attack

in the game of lawn tennis.

Such was the type of game which enabled the challenger, William Renshaw, in 1881 at Wimbledon, to wrest the championship from his more orthodox opponent, J. T. Hartley.

Thus the year 1881 may be regarded as one of the landmarks in the progress of the strokes and tactics of lawn tennis. From this point onwards the tactics of the game have see-sawed between attack and defence, each new move in attack calling forth a more highly developed type of counterstroke, which in its turn has inspired the

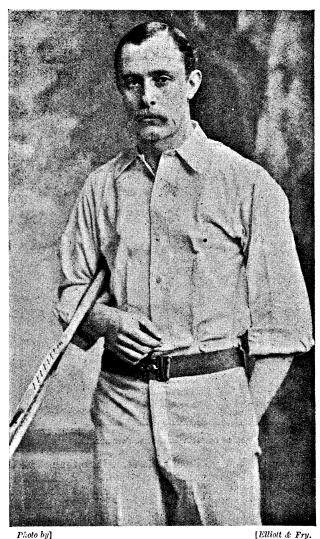


Photo by]

ERNEST RENSHAW.

more original type of player to invent and perfect other strokes and tactics to meet it. During the years in which Willie Renshaw was champion-he won this honour seven

times in all, from 1881 to 1886 and in 1889—

the development of the game was very marked, and the public generally took an increasing interest in it. A Renshaw match, for instance, was quite an event.

It is curious to reflect that in the days of the Renshaw twins we were the only lawn tennis playing nation in the world, with the exception of America and Australia. Later, while we were sending players to France, Sweden, Germany and Denmark, and taking part in Continental tournaments at Wiesbaden, Hamburg, Stockholm and Paris,

American players were evolving their own game in their own way. The Australians, too, as may be expected from such a sports-loving community, were already on the verge of producing players good enough to challenge the supremacy of the rest of the world.

In 1900 three of our best players, A. W. Gore, H. Roper Barrett and E. D. Black, went across to America to compete in the first Davis Cup competition. The visit must have been an absolute eye-opener for them quite apart from the crushing defeat which they sustained at the hands of the home team.

I well remember hearing from Roper Barrett his surprised account of the nature of the courts, balls and the method of play employed generally by the Americans, of which he subsequently contributed a vivid description to Mr. Wallis Myers's interesting survey of "The Story of the Davis Cup."

The courts apparently were very dry indeed, and appeared to be of a distinctly inferior turf. The balls were much softer than those in use in England at that time, and appeared to afford unlimited scope for the putting on of screw and spin.

These two points are worth mentioning as showing how the American service was probably evolved. For at that

time Holcombe Ward and Dwight Davis, the inventors of this type of delivery, must have been working at and perfecting the method of making the stroke which produced this particular delivery in its per-

fection a couple of years later.

Such a type of ball would afford a splendid medium for this spin, which the rather dry and inferior nature of the ground would be eminently suited to show off to its best It was reported that the ball advantage. on several occasions came over the net shaped like an egg. This to our English and very conventional ideas of stroke production appeared almost like a fairy story,

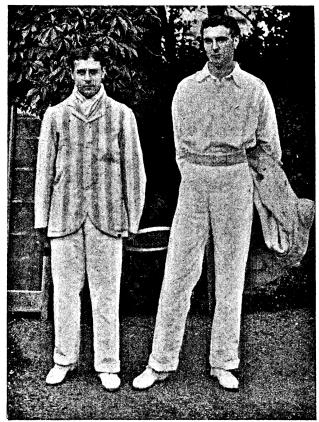
which we were to learn in 1901 was very far from being the case. For in that year Dwight Davis and Holcombe Ward, the holders of the American doubles championship, crossed the Atlantic to compete in the championships at Wimbledon, and won a long four-set match against the English pair mainly by the aid of their break-and-kick service, which, up to then, they had so carefully concealed, as Commander Hillyard records in his interesting book, "Forty Years of First-Class Lawn Tennis," even throughout a preliminary match played on his famous court at Thorpe-Satchville, in which he and Dr. Eaves had hoped to ascertain the secret of the new service.

Thus it can be seen that the genius of the American player quickly divined the salient point upon which to base his tactics. He saw that the service was the means by which an attack could be launched, and did not regard it merely as a means of starting the game.

The institution of the Davis Cup competition bore early fruit in its effects upon English play and methods, for, needless to say, this service soon produced hosts of imitators. The English service delivery at this time was of the straightforward swerving type, that is to say, the swerve through the air and the spin off the ground were in one curve more or less from beginning to end.

In contradistinction to this, the "American service" always swerved in the air in one direction and "broke" in the other upon hitting the ground. Its method of production is too involved to go into now, but it undoubtedly affected the opposing player, since the server appeared to tie himself up into terrific knots when he struck the ball, which came over the net in the actual shape of an egg, and after bouncing appeared to be possessed by the devil and leapt off the ground extraordinarily quickly and at a tremendous angle.

This service even to the Americans was not altogether an unmixed blessing, since it



H. L. DOHERTY AND R. F. DOHERTY.

induced its users to come in to the net for a killing volley rather than by careful cultivation of sound ground strokes to make the openings for net play, which is the mark of the present-day player of every nation.

Its effect upon English players was even worse, since their imitation fell very far short of the American reality, which, like the curate's egg, was good only in parts, and of its very nature deprived them of that proper attention to good ground strokes which hitherto had been the basis of their game.

Thus the English player fell between two stools. His service developed into a kind of freak delivery, and his ground strokes were neglected in order to imitate this hitand-rush-to-the-net method of play which the American service induced.

We next come to the further evolution of the American service, as invented and exploited by the great Norman Brookes, one of the most original players who has ever lived.

When Dr. Eaves, who was a tremendous

believer in, and an excellent exponent of, this most tricky delivery, took this service to Australia, he found in Norman Brookes the man who was to adapt and change its character to a more perfect and far more deadly means of attack.

It may be interesting to know that Brookes at this time was a pure base-line player, using a 16-ounce racket and hardly ever volleying at all. When he saw the possibilities of what could be done with the American service as shown him by Dr. Eaves, he evolved a service that was at that time the modern prototype of the "googly" delivery at cricket—that is, with a break so concealed that it was impossible to gauge its direction until it had bounced.

Moreover, with his service he also produced a volleying game that was as near

perfection as anything that had yet been seen on a tennis court.

In England he was regarded as an absolute terror, and was quite unplayable by any but the hardest and most accurate of hitters—S. H. Smith to wit—and by the then champion, H. L. Doherty, whose wonderful genius for the game enabled him to defend his title successfully against the Australian wizard in 1905.

Thus in five years the American service of Holcombe Ward underwent a distinct modification, through the enterprise of Brookes, which at a later date was to be still further developed by the terrific deliveries of M. E. McLoughlin, the "Californian comet," and G. L. Patterson, who until his arm had lost some of its cunning possessed the severest service of any living player.

In connection with McLoughlin's service, when it first appeared in England one recalls how it enabled its user to score in the championships at Wimbledon, although Roper Barrett put up a fine fight in the first round. When McLoughlin played Wilding in the challenge round on the 4th of July of that year, so great was the reputation of the young American that all the Americans in London came down with the "stars and stripes" rolled up in their breast pockets, and a record crowd for the old Wimbledon of over 5,000 people was present to see the historic match.

These flags were never unfurled and the American backers lost their money.

The result of the match showed conclusively that matches even then were not to be won by means of one highly perfected stroke, and that an all-round player could win against even the



Photo by

(Sport & General.

most deadly battery of service and smash that had yet been seen on a tennis court. This was the first triumph, in this country at any rate, of the all-round player over the specialist, and, further, marks the point when the all-court game, as played by upon, by M. E. McLoughlin and some of the other American experts. It was left to G. L. Patterson to produce his super-service which, until recently, stood alone for pace and power.

One can see, therefore, that the service

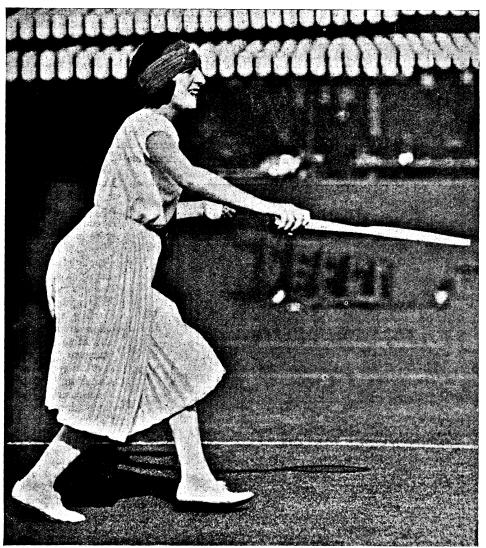


Photo by]

MDLLE, SUZANNE LENGLEN.

[Topical.

Tilden and the American experts of to-day, came into definite existence.

To sum up, the American service invented by Holcombe Ward in 1901 was learned by Dr. Eaves, and taken to Australia a little later. Here it was modified and adapted by Norman Brookes, whose method was again imitated, and still further improved and its accompanying volleying had, until 1913, or even after the war, been regarded as the governing factors in the tactics of players generally.

Some ground strokes and what is now known as the all-court game have considerably modified this rather extreme influence, and we have to-day in W. T. Tilden,

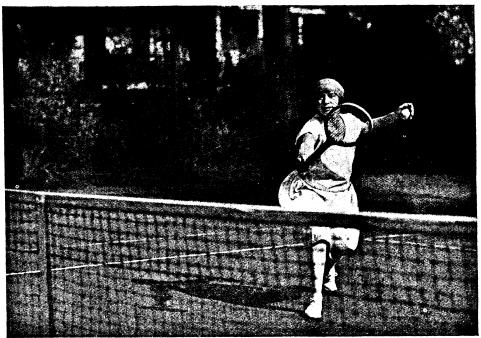


Photo by] [Percy G. Luck.

MRS. GODFREE, LADY CHAMPION.

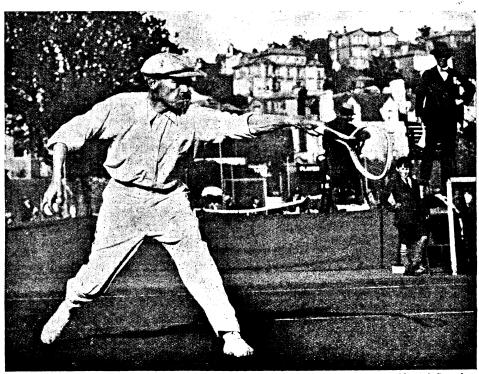


Photo by] [Sport & General.
NORMAN BROOKES.

Vincent Richards, R. Lacoste and Mlle. Lenglen types of players whose game is neither modelled upon excessive specialisation in any one branch nor depends for its accuracy upon the over-development of any one stroke.

The keynote of the American game to-day is speed plus accuracy. The ball is taken on the rise and driven, by means of top spin or sliced shots, with accuracy and speed, and of a length that is maintained throughout the five-set match with very little fluctuation. Sometimes it is volleyed, sometimes it is smashed, more often than not it is driven for aces, but the play throughout seems to be marked by tactics that lead less to the exploiting of any one specialised stroke than to those which are affected by general all-round excellence of stroke play.

So much for the invention and originality of the players America and Australia, to whom we in this country are undoubtedly indebted for the present-day methods.

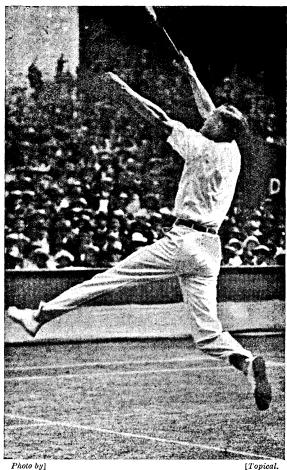
In Europe, on the other hand, the evolution of the game underwent no startling changes by reason of the invention or discovery of any particular strokes While America and or tactics. Australia were inventing, we in

Europe were merely imitating, with models which, while they were perfect of their kind, still displayed no originality or inventive traits in their make-up.

In other words, the play of R. F. and H. L. Doherty appeared to us to be good enough. Their tradition will live long, and had, moreover, very many imitators on the Continent. The play of the popular French players at the beginning of the twentieth century was undoubtedly modelled upon that of R. F. Doherty. The play of the Germans, too, in Otto Froitzheim, F. W. Rahe and H. Kleinschroth, undoubtedly bore traces of this influence.

This type of game was what one may call the graceful, orthodox and accurate, rather than the brilliantly unexpected style.

One can certainly trace this development to the type of court upon which the continental players have always played the game. The modern hard court with its less sure



W. T. TILDEN.

[Topical.

surface for the feet, with its trueness of bound of the ball, afforded little opportunities for wild or badly designed net tactics. Ground strokes, accurate and severe, were evolved, with orthodox production and a low bound to the ball.

Thus players on the Continent have gone steadily forward with less variation of style than those in England, with the result that they have proved to be some of the most brilliant performers in the world since 1920. We, on the other hand, with our variable climate and methods of play, have tried to emulate strokes and tactics for which neither our skill nor our own temperament are suited.

Moreover, the game in America and France has undoubtedly become national in its widest sense, for while America still has golf as a rival, France appears to be wholehearted in its enthusiasm for lawn tennis as its summer game.

Further, the French play the game in the most scientific and sensible manner. Play on their hard courts takes place every May to September out of doors; from October to April nothing but indoor play on wood floors is thought of, with the exception of play for the chosen few on the Riviera. Consequently, the French player

at all they keep up their form on covered courts in the "armouries" or drill halls in their big cities. If they are keen to get out-of-door play in the dead season, they go to Mexico, to Palm Beach, Florida, or to California, where on sand or asphalt courts they are able to keep up the quality of their strokes.



Photo by] [Sport & General,

keeps up his high standard of the summer by means of the perfect practice afforded by play on wood during the winter months.

In America, too, they practise their game on very similar lines. There, although they play on grass as well as their "dirt" courts, they never dream of playing on outside courts in the eastern and central districts after October has arrived. If they do play

In England, however, we are not content with playing the game on grass from May to October, but by means of "hard courts" endeavour to keep up the interest in a game which is pre-eminently one for the sun and warmth, in snow and rain-storms and biting winds. Our hard courts are thus hardly ever up to the standard of those in France during these months; our weather

conditions are very often so difficult that accurate play is nearly impossible. Thus the standard of play is lowered rather than raised by the winter practice.

Moreover, in this country there are far too many tournaments throughout the season. Consequently players are tempted to devote more time to winning prizes than to developing their game. When one compares this with the conditions in force in America, Australia or France, one can see how our foreign rivals, by concentrated play and intensive practice, have made their game so vastly superior to our own, which although practised by the most sport-loving nation in the world, is not sufficiently thought out or worked up to become that of a champion nation.



Photo by]

[McKenzie, Eastbourne.

COMMANDER G. W. HILLYARD, R.N.

The distinguished player who was Secretary of the All-England Club, Wimbledon, through some of its most eventful years, 1907-1925.



"'Do you mean that I am to say good-bye to you, and not see you any more? Myrtle—we can't. It's impossible.' 'We must,' she said. 'Oh, Christopher, don't make it too hard for me!'"

TIME AND THE WOMAN

By E. M. DELAFIELD

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

Wo very young people were in despair—as has indeed been the privilege of very young people, from time immemorial.

The sub-lieutenant of the Curlew was twenty-four, and the wife of the Resident of Alor Bahru was twenty-three. The Curlew had been three months in harbour and the Officers had been entertained by all the province, and in return, on the very eve of sailing, they were giving a dance at the Club.

The Resident and Lady Farleigh had promised to come.

The heart of Myrtle Farleigh's despair lay in the fact that Sub-Lieutenant Christopher Allen was leaving the Malay Straits on the morrow, and that he had not told her in words that he loved her.

The heart of Christopher Allen's despair lay in his self-tormenting speculations as to whether Lady Farleigh was, or was not, unhappy because he was going away.

Both Myrtle and Christopher felt that the one thing in the whole world that really mattered was that they should meet at the dance that night.

As usual, there were people dining at the Residency. Just as Myrtle was going to her room to dress, her husband called to her from the yeranda:

"I hope we're playing Bridge to-night, dear."

Her heart stood still.

"No, Simon—don't you remember? We've the Curlew's dance at the Club. We're all going on there after dinner."

"I'd forgotten. What a pity! We might have had some good Bridge. We're not bound to go to this *Curlew* business surely."

"I think we must, Simon. You said you would, when the invitation came, and I

accepted."

She remembered vividly how she had striven to make her choked voice sound natural, when she had held out the invitation card and asked her husband if she was to accept for them both.

"Well, I suppose we must, if you said we'd go! We'll leave early, Myrtle, if you don't mind. Those affairs are generally boring, and I don't suppose there's likely to be anyone who'll want a rubber."

"Very well," she said bitterly.

How like Simon, she told herself, to say that they would leave early, without troubling to find out the wishes of his wife, nearly twenty-one years younger than himself. It was surely not extraordinary that she should enjoy dancing, and she hated going away early just when things were in full swing.

Below these surface thoughts was the aching, resentful disappointment at having to curtail her few remaining hours with Christopher Allen.

She went to her bedroom where the Amah awaited her.

Myrtle's heart lightened slightly at the sight of her new frock and new silk stockings, lying on the bed, dimly visible through the white hangings of the mosquito netting. She had been saving the new frock on purpose for this. It looked lovely—lovelier out here than anywhere else, bearing the unmistakable stamp of Home, and London.

She suddenly visualised the resplendent, glittering shop windows of Regent Street and Bond Street, the taxis whizzing by, and the English men and women passing one another on the crowded pavements. Theatre-goers would be just starting now, for dinner at the restaurants. . . .

A familiar wave of home-sickness rushed over her.

She had been one year in the East, it would be another year before she and her husband would go Home on leave—and all her life would probably be like that. Just existing, from one spell of leave to another.

If she'd had a baby, she would have had to leave it at Home, after a very few years. Myrtle Farleigh was glad, rather than sorry, that she had no children. Simon would have been such a strict, old-fashioned sort of father, and he'd have expected her to devote all her time to being a mother.

As it was, he expected her to be a wife, and to find in that sufficient occupation for her time, her thoughts, and her emotions.

Myrtle wondered desperately why she had ever married Simon.

She hadn't known what it would be like, that was yery certain.

"The Mem's bath," said the voice of the Amah, recalling her.

"Thank you, Amah."

She left her white broderie-anglaise tennis frock on the floor, and slipped her arms into the blue Chinese silk kimono that the Amah held ready; and then passed into the adjoining bathroom.

It was nice to have so many lovely things, and Simon was generous to her, and liked her to be beautifully dressed. But the clothes, and the jewellery that he had given her, and the fun of being the Resident's wife, and the most important hostess in Alor Bahru, didn't make up for those other things that she hadn't got, and would never have now, and for which the whole of her youth was crying out.

She hadn't known, though, how terribly she wanted happiness, and love, and laughter, and companionship, until she'd met Christopher Allen.

Myrtle abandoned all pretence of thinking about anything else, and gave herself wholly to the day-dreams that had become her habitual solace.

She thought of Christopher Allen and of herself. The times they'd played tennis together—especially that day when they'd won the mixed doubles—"I've never cared about winning before,—just played for the fun of the game—but this time I wanted to win frightfully "—he had said to her afterwards.

And the evening they'd dined on board the Curlew. She'd sat next the Captain, of course, and Christopher had been right down at the other end of the table. He'd never taken his eyes off her. Every time that she glanced towards him, in delicious confusion, she'd meet his gaze, fixed full upon her.

And the dances they'd had together. At her own parties, Myrtle couldn't give him more than one or two extras, but at the Club, they'd danced together almost all through

the breathless, tropical night, time after

Luckily, it was all right nowadays, to dance with one partner the whole evening. Everybody understood that it was just because their steps suited one another.

Myrtle smiled faintly, and flushed, at the remembrance of those dances with Christopher, when, together, they had swayed to the music until movement seemed to merge into sound, and sound into ecstasy.

Thank Heaven, they'd got this evening. She wondered whether the secret anticipation of it had been with Christopher all day long, as it had been with herself, just below the level of conscious thought. Still smiling a little, Myrtle Farleigh crossed the threshold of her wide, cool bedroom again.

Although she was so very unhappy she was aware of a delightful thrill of excitement and pleasure, as the Amah lowered the new frock carefully over her head.

Myrtle moved to the long cheval-glass, and drew a deep breath of satisfaction as she gazed at her own reflection.

The pale sea-green of the stiffly-outstanding taffeta suited her fairness and pallor, and the formal posies of silk flowers that decorated the short, full skirt, added richness and colour to the whole aquatint

She added a touch of red to her lips, and hoped that Simon would not notice it. disapproved of lip-stick.

Myrtle's hair was long and abundant, coiled into two heavy, dull-gold shells over her ears.

She wore the long necklace of pearls that her husband had given her when they were married. As she looked at herself, she telt that sudden rush of joy in her own beauty that comes to a woman who knows herself beloved.

But when she joined her husband in the double drawing-room of the big bungalow, Myrtle's young, fair face had resumed its habitual look of wistful dissatisfaction.

Christopher Allen was going away. The mysterito-night it would be all over. ous radiance that had lain over everything for the past three months would disappear, leaving in its stead an intolerable dreariness.

"There will never be anything to look forward to again," Myrtle told herself, with all the finality of her years.

But in her heart she did not really believe this, and had a vague, unanalysed hope that some miracle, of a nature wholly undefined, might bring her the happiness that she desired, and that, to her, was now centred in the good looks, the personality, youthfulness, and magnetism, of Christopher Allen.

"How are we going?" Sir Simon kept

on asking in his fussy way.

Eight people had been dining at the Residency, and each one of the four men present was eager to be allowed to take Lady Farleigh to the Club in his car. In the end, however, she went with her husband, in their own Austin limousine, and they took with them an elderly married couple, as eager as was Sir Simon himself to make up a rubber of Bridge. They discussed the chances of finding a fourth player at the Club, all the way. Myrtle listened to none of it. Her heart was beating wildly, with increasing excitement.

As they entered the Club she saw hima tall, broad-shouldered young fellow in white uniform and gold braid, as dark as she herself was fair—obviously watching and waiting.

She paused involuntarily, on her way to the ladies' dressing-room.

Their hands met, and their eyes.

"I'll be at the entrance, in the dancing-The first value is just beginning. Don't let's miss any of it," he entreated.

They only missed a very few minutes of it. Myrtle had left her thin crêpe shawl, and adjusted her hair, in an incredibly short time, and joined him in the ball-room.

They danced together.

Will you come out into the garden, or are you afraid of the mosquitoes?"

"Oh no, I'd love to come," she said.

They went out into the velvety darkness of the tropic night, alive with a thousand humming sounds of life.

The strains of music reached them softly, the paper lanterns swung and flickered above -they were young, and in love.

The inevitable crisis caught them almost before they were aware of danger.

"I can't go away to-morrow—I can't," said Christopher suddenly and fiercely.

She swayed closer to him, and her upturned face revealed the answer that her lips had not spoken.

"I love you," said Christopher. "Are you angry with me?"

"No," she whispered.

"Myrtle, darling—darling—"
She tried to say "You mustn't," but she was in his arms, and past all resistance.

"Oh, I've been so unhappy," she murmured. "I didn't know-if you-"

could be like."

was wrong. I've married Simon, and I've

promised to be faithful to him 'till death

us do part,' and although I can never, never

be happy, however long I may live, at least

-at least-I shall have known what life

"Do you mean that I am to say good-bye

" Darling, beautiful Myrtle-I didn't care -I ought not ever to have told you."

"I'm glad you did. I shan't ever be sorry," she said rebelliously.

He bent his head to hers, and they kissed

passionately.

"Myrtle," said Christopher at last-"(good Heavens, if you knew how often I have longed to call you Myrtle!)—only tell me one thing. I've got to know, before I say good-bye to you. Are happy?"

No," she answered very low. "Isn't he good to you?"

"Oh yes, I suppose so. I ought never to have married him. But he told me-everyone told methat love would come afterwards. Only it didn't, Christopher."

"He's much older than you are."

"Years and years older."

what can we do?" "Nothing, Christopher," she swered, with viction.

"Poor little dar-Oh, Myrtle,

ling.



"'Ten years!' repeated Flavia Lambart, in a surprised voice. 'That's a very long time ago.' 'A very long time,' he agreed, gravely. He was, indeed, beginning to feel that those ten years constituted almost a lifetime."

"If only I could take you away!" groaned the sailor. "But I've nothing, nothing in the world except my wretched pay."

It wouldn't be right," said Myrtle, with a sudden note of inflexibility in her young, gentle voice. "Oh, Christopher, I do love you-but I couldn't ever do what I thought to you, and not see you any more? Myrtle -we can't. It's impossible."

"We must," she said. "Oh, Christopher, don't make it too hard for me!"

"I'll do anything in the world you tell me," he answered wretchedly.

Unheeded, time went past them. People were beginning to leave.

"Christopher, I'll have to go. I suppose Simon's been playing Bridge all this time— I hope he has. He never does watch the dancing."

"I can't let you go, Myrtle-I can't."

For a long moment they remained locked in a close embrace.

Then the girl tore herself away, her face drenched in tears.

"Perhaps it's been wicked of me to let any of this happen to-night," she said pitifully, "but it's all we shall ever have, Christopher."

"Some day perhaps things will come right for us. Darling, he--he's much older than

you are."

"Oh, don't!" she cried sharply.

"I oughtn't to have said it. Forgive me. But this I must say. If ever you are free, I shall be waiting, Myrtle."

"You'll fall in love with somebody else."

"Never, as long as I live. How can you say a thing like that to me?"

"Oh, forgive me," cried Myrtle in her "I didn't mean it, darling. neither of us ever, ever care for anybody else. I know that as well as you do.'

With what seemed like devastating suddenness, the opening bars of the National Anthem sounded from the ball-room.

Christopher Allen sprang to attention.

"It's all over," half sobbed Myrtle.

"Is Lady Farleigh there?" asked a discreet voice, almost at her elbow. "Sir Simon is anxious to go, I think-

"I'm coming," said Myrtle in a stifled

She felt Christopher's desperate grip on her hand, and, as desperately, withdrew her own. Holding her head bent, she slipped into the lighted hall, and to the nearly empty dressing-room. When she came out again, Sir Simon was at the entrance, and their car was waiting.

"Come along, Myrtle," he said amiably. "I hope you've been in no hurry to go. We've had some capital Bridge—capital."

He'd noticed nothing.

"I ought to be thankful," Myrtle told herself drearily. "But nothing mattersnothing will ever matter again—for my heart is broken."

II.

It was ten years later that Christopher Allen saw Myrtle Farleigh again.

She had been a widow for more than two years, and he was still unmarried.

After their parting at Alor Bahru, he had

twice written to her, letters that all the world might have seen, and she had replied to each, after an interval, with a prim, stilted little note that told him nothing.

His first sense of loss and frustration time had of necessity dulled, but Christopher had not had even a passing love-affair

with any other woman.

He was in Mesopotamia when he heard of the death of Sir Simon Farleigh in London, from pneumonia following influenza.

It was two years after that that he at last found himself on his way to England.

He had written once to Myrtle Farleigh, and in reply she had told him that she was living at the place in Somersetshire that her husband had bought many years earlier, and that had been their home whenever they were in England. She asked him to come and stay there for a few days, and he wondered how much lay between the lines of the letter.

Even her handwriting had altered, and developed into something a great deal more mature and decided than was the writing in the two little notes he still preserved.

Christopher Allen wondered how much he

himself had changed.

Twenty-four to thirty-four—and the War in between. He tried to tell himself that he had very little to hope for from his visit to Somersetshire.

It was on a mild, misty autumn afternoon that he arrived, and was driven to the door of the tall, square Georgian house.

A few yellowing leaves fluttered down from the beech trees that surrounded the square gravelled court in front of the house, pigeons preened themselves on the stone balustrade that ran round two sides of the court, and a big Airedale lay on the step before the

It was the most complete contrast imaginable to the scene of his parting with Myrtle Farleigh.

She met him in the hall.

He had tried once or twice to visualise their meeting, but his imagination, he knew, had played him false.

They had parted as lovers, but they would not, after ten years of almost unbroken silence, so meet.

And yet it was unthinkable that they should greet one another as strangers.

It was her self-possession, rather than his —he was able to note through the tumult of his feelings—that carried the situation.

"I'm glad to see you again!" and she gave him both her hands, for a long moment.

They were stronger, firmer hands, though not less soft, than the ones that had trembled in his clasp one night at Alor Bahru.

She had changed, of course. Christopher had expected that, but something in the quality of the change eluded definition. More mature—she was certainly that, and with a poise and steadiness that she had, as certainly, lacked at twenty-three.

She was more beautiful than he had expected her to be, but it was a beauty that now, strangely, held a touch of austerity. There was none of the old wistfulness in her face, none of the faint bewilderment that had made men long to protect her.

If the word had not been so utterly unfamiliar, in connection with his image of Myrtle Farleigh, he would have said that her appearance, now, suggested nothing so

much as complete self-reliance.

"Come and sit down, Christopher," she said, after the moment's silence, during which they had gazed at one another across their clasped hands. "I'm so glad you came."

"I'm glad too."

He was conscious of embarrassment, but met her straightforward look as straight-

forwardly.

"Come along," she repeated, and he guessed that she was resolutely setting the key for their conversation, and that it was to be one of matter-of-fact friendliness, at any rate for the moment.

"Don't you like my corner seat, near the fire? It's real old oak, though the chintz

seats, of course, are modern."

"It's charming," he said appreciatively, and looking round the square, spacious hall,

he repeated: "Charming."

"You'll like the house, I hope. I had it done up about eighteen months ago—it was very dark before that, and the furniture and wallpapers were dreadful."

He divined that the "dreadful" furniture and wallpapers had probably had to remain untouched during Sir Simon's lifetime.

Lady Farleigh, he knew, had been left by her husband a small income, and the house, but she could not be called a wealthy woman.

Christopher, however, through the death of his father and the loss of his only brother in the War, was no longer very poor. He was not now dependent upon his profession.

"It's a charming house," he repeated.

"I shall enjoy showing you over it. There's nothing very special to see, but it's just nice, and characteristic of its period." "You like England better than the East?" he ventured.

"Yes, indeed. During the last year of my husband's office, you know, I was at home, here, by myself. I'd been ordered at least two years in England, before going out again."

"I hope that doesn't mean that you were

ill."

"No, not really ill. But of course it is a trying climate, and I wasn't as strong as I am now."

She smiled, and he noticed how very much the quality of her smile had altered. There was nothing in the least wistful about it, now, but neither was there very much that was light-hearted or spontaneous.

He wondered very much whether he would ever learn the true story of those ten years that had turned Myrtle Farleigh from a girl to a woman.

Presently she rose, saying that she would show him his room.

He followed her up the wide, shallow oak staircase. On the carpeted landing above, they met a young girl, dressed in a short tweed skirt, and jumper of rose-red wool. She wore her curly dark hair short, and looked about eighteen years old.

"Captain Allen—my cousin, Miss Flavia

Lambart," said Lady Farleigh.

Christopher and the girl shook har ds.

He realised that she was probably living there, a companion for Myrtle.

"You are in here. Our panel-room. I do hope there's everything you want . . ."

He glanced mechanically round the oakpanelled, comfortable bedroom, with its low, wide window-seat, overlooking the park, its bowl of corn-coloured chrysanthemums on the writing-table, its brightly-burning fire.

"I'm sure I have. It's delightful. What

a pretty room!"

"You'll be sure and ask for everything you want, won't you, Christopher? Dinner's at eight o'clock."

She left him.

At least she had called him Christopher. He did not feel, however, that he was expected to call her Myrtle in return.

Although he could not have told exactly what reception he had expected, his heart

felt heavy with disappointment.

Just before eight o'clock he went downstairs. Miss Flavia Lambart was talking to the Airedale, in the hall. She looked up and smiled, as he came towards her.

"Myrtle, I am afraid, may be a few minutes late. The village policeman came marching up about a quarter of an hour ago, and she went to him in the library. I expect he wants her to sign things. You know she's a magistrate?"

"No, I didn't," he replied, vaguely startled.

"Oh, yes. Very soon after people knew

"Don't you think so? Why, everyone says she's so splendid at that kind of thing. She's on all the Committees in the county, it seems to me—and the Poard of Guardians, and everything. Of course, I've only known Myrtle since she came here, the last year that her husband was in Malaya, but it's



"'Even if it was very, very quickly over, you did care for me for a little while.' 'It wasn't quickly over.

You mustn't ever think that. I nearly broke my heart after you went away, Christopher.'"

that she was going to—to stay on here. I think she was pleased—that sort of thing interests her. Oh, how I hate it myself!"

Christopher laughed at her exaggerated air of horror.

"Somehow, I shouldn't have thought it was much in Lady Farleigh's line," he suggested.

always seemed to me that she got roped in for everything from the very start, just because she's so splendid at organisation."

Well, perhaps it wasn't an altogether extraordinary development, in a woman occupying the position that Sir Simon Farleigh's wife must necessarily have occupied, even in the Far East, during the War. No

doubt there had been Red Cross Committees. and Flag Days, and similar activities, and the Resident's wife had been placed at the

head of these things.

And so she'd a gift for organisation. didn't square with the clinging, pathetic Myrtle that he remembered, but—but after all, how could he claim to have known more than one aspect of her, and that a transitory one, in three months? Moved by an absurd impulse he asked the girl:

"Does Lady Farleigh ever dance now?"

"Not that I know of. She's been in mourning-and her husband was ill before that. It's very quiet down here, too. don't have many dances, except one or two at Christmas.".

"Or-or play tennis?"

"Oh yes, she plays tennis. She's very good. What made you ask? Did she dance a great deal when you knew her abroad?"

"She danced beautifully ten years ago."

"Ten years!" repeated Flavia Lambart, in a surprised voice. "That's a very long time ago."

"A very long time," he agreed, gravely. He was, indeed, beginning to feel that those ten years constituted almost a lifetime.

While dinner was in progress, he took a longer look at his hostess than he had hitherto ventured to do. Her beauty was very striking, but it lacked warmth, and suggested unapproachability. Christopher was also impressed by the perfection of the service at the Manor House. Either Sir Simon's household staff had included a very admirable housekeeper, or his widow devoted a great deal of energy and ability to domestic supervision. He felt more and more inclined to adopt the latter supposition.

Myrtle apologised for a very quiet evening, spent by the three over the fire in desultory conversation, and suggested that Christopher might like to attend a neighbouring meet of

the hounds next morning.

"Flavia would like to show you the way, I know. Unfortunately we haven't got a car, but very likely someone will offer you a lift, if you care to follow a little way."

"It's more fun to go on foot," declared "One sees much more. You don't mind a scramble, do you, Captain Allen?"

"Not at all. Aren't you coming yourself?" he added, turning boldly to Lady

Farleigh.

"I'm afraid not. I have to sit on the Bench to-morrow morning, and unfortunately there's a Committee Meeting of the

Nursing Association in the afternoon; but I shall be free by tea-time."

"How busy you are!"
"I like it," she returned levelly.

Before he had been two days at the Manor House, Christopher saw that it was true. Myrtle was not only absorbed by the activities that she so successfully conducted, but they appeared to fill her horizon to the exclusion of any more personal element.

He was a great deal thrown in the society of Flavia Lambart, and learnt that she was an orphan, and had been living at the Manor House ever, since the death of Myrtle's husband. Bewildered, however, and rather resentful, Christopher was determined to make an opportunity for being alone with his hostess. On the third day of his visit a very mild autumn day—he asked if he might walk to the village with her.

"But aren't you going to play golf with

Flavia?"

"She didn't say anything about it, and anyway we could do that to-morrow. Please let me come with you."

"Certainly, if you don't mind waiting while I go into one or two cottages."

He assured her that he did not mind, and they set out together.

"What a lot you do in the county!"

"I suppose I do," she assented. "I like it very much, you know."

"May I say that I was—surprised? Somehow—in the old days—I didn't know— I hadn't fancied-"

"Of course, I was hardly grown up in those days," she said calmly. "When I was little Flavia's age, for instance, I should have seen nothing interesting or attractive in what I suppose may be called, in a very mild sense, public administrative work."

"Was it the War that changed that?" "Partly, perhaps. But mostly, I think, it was for the sake of occupation. You see, I've no children. When I first came here, while Simon was still abroad, I had nothing to do except think. The parson's wife interested me in one or two things at first, and then, gradually, I came to like work for its own sake, and to find that I could do it efficiently. It may seem odd—even rather petty, perhaps—to you, if I may say that the position I hold with the people here means a great deal to me now."

"You don't ever long for a wider scope,

a less local stage, so to speak?"

"That might come. One of these days I might even stand for Parliament," she said, laughing a little. "You don't approve of that, I expect. You're old-fashioned, aren't

you, Christopher?"

"I daresay." He was wondering how to frame his next sentence. At last he spoke, slowly.

"Myrtle, you know what I came down

here for?"

She looked at him quickly, at that.

"Have you forgotten one night at Alor Bahru, when the *Curlew* gave a farewell dance?"

"No, Christopher, I haven't ever forgotten

tnat.

- "I told you then that if—if you were ever free, I'd come and find you. I couldn't come before. It was impossible. You knew that."
 - "Yes, I knew that," she agreed tonelessly.
- "I can see that it's no use now, but—is there ever going to be any hope for me?"

"I oughtn't to have let you come!" she

cried suddenly.

"Why not? You must have wanted to see if I was still the man that had, at least, power to stir you ten years ago. Even if it was very, very quickly over, you did care for me for a little while."

"It wasn't quickly over. You mustn't ever think that. I nearly broke my heart after you went away, Christopher."

"But then-couldn't you-one day

----- *i* "

"I used to think I could. I used to think that I'd never, never change."

They came to a small, whitewashed cottage, and she stopped.

"I must go in here. Will you wait for me? We can talk on the way home."

He waited patiently outside the cottage, and then outside a farm, and then another cottage. At last she said:

"That's all. We'll go home another way,

if you like."

The other way led them through very quiet lanes, and across a long, deserted-looking strip of common.

"Myrtle," he said wretchedly, "will you tell me what's changed you? If it's just that you don't feel you can care for me, I shall understand. Or is there some other man?"

"No, there was never anybody but you, Christopher. But, you see, I thought it was my duty to forget about you, and I tried, and I tried. Sometimes I think those first few months, after we'd said good-bye, exhausted the whole of my emotional capacity. Simon never guessed, I'm certain. Then I came to England and I got interested in these other things—the things I do now—and somehow, gradually, that's come to be all I want."

"It can't be. You're too young, and too beautiful, Myrtle. You'll come to life

again."

"I don't feel that I shall," she said simply. "And on the whole I'd rather not. Ten years ago it was different, Christopher. If I'd been free, then, or if—although I wasn't free—you'd taken me—— But now I'm quite content to be what I am—without personal ties, and able to feel myself of some little use in one small corner of the earth."

Christopher Allen experienced the strangest mingling of disappointment and relief. The Myrtle Farleigh whom he had known existed no longer. Ten years had transmuted her into another, different woman.

But it was the twenty-three-year-old Myrtle, not this one, that he had loved.

"The real reason that I asked you down here," she said, with a little rallying smile, "was because of Flavia Lambart. I thought that....."

"No!" Christopher interrupted her almost violently, in a strong revulsion of feeling.

And it was not until the day before he was to leave the Manor House that he suddenly realised how young, and pretty, and sympathetic, Flavia Lambart really was.



WHYMR.DUMPHRY WAS SO WELL INFORMED

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LENDON

R. PIERCE EVELEIGH, architect, had occasion to go to London one morning in order to talk somewhat severely to a man about bricks. This being so, he had arranged subsequently to call at Mr. Dumphry's office in order that they might take luncheon together. Ushered into Mr. Dumphry's private room, Mr. Pierce Eveleigh looked a little like Don Quixote in a morning coat and top-hat. He was smoking a cigarette in a tube of amber and gold, and for this he apologized.

"I'm smoking, Dumphry, you see. Hope you don't mind. It's not against the rules

of your sacred office, is it?"

"My dear fellow," said Dumphry, "it doesn't matter in the least. We shall be going out in two minutes, anyhow. I admit that I never smoke here myself."

"Never?" said Mr. Pierce Eveleigh

searchingly.

"Very, very rarely. I have sometimes broken my own rule when I thought the

occasion justified it."

"Why make any silly rule? I don't say it would do for you to smoke that filthy old pipe of yours here. But cigarettes are permitted in lots of offices. You've got to grasp that everybody smokes—man, woman and child. Smoking is no longer prohibited in the tube lifts. I can quite imagine that the offer of a cigarette might be of distinct help in a business interview. Just you think it over."

"I will," said Mr. Dumphry. "I will. I admit the same idea had occasionally occurred to me. But it takes a good deal to make me upset a long-established custom. And besides, I don't know that I care very

much about cigarettes."

"Mere question of habit," said Eveleigh.
"If you smoked them for a fortnight you'd be quite willing to give that old pipe of yours a rest. And I should think it's earned it."

The most judicious method—and Mr. Dumphry was judicious—in embarking on any new adventure, is to begin by modest experiment. After luncheon that day Mr. Dumphry purchased ten Virginia cigarettes for sixpence and bore them off to his office.

That afternoon Mr. Stetson came in and accepted a cigarette. He brought in

some very satisfactory business.

At tea-time Mr. Phipps came in, and Mr. Phipps partook of a cup of tea and a cigarette afterwards. And he also brought in satisfactory business. Neither Mr. Phipps nor Mr. Stetson seemed to think that Mr. Dumphry was transgressing in any way. And when the time came for him to leave the office Mr. Dumphry, who never on any account smoked a pipe in the street, saw no reason why he should not smoke a cigarette. By this time, what with one thing and another, only two of the original ten survived.

Mr. Dumphry slightly revised his rules. Smoking would not be permitted in his room until after luncheon. It would give a wrong impression. It would suggest that business was not being taken seriously. But after luncheon, unless anything should occur to change his mind, Mr. Dumphry proposed to permit cigarettes in moderation.

A week later he paid six guineas for a small tortoiseshell cigarette-case. By this time his secretary was instructed to bring in a small packet of cigarettes every day. In theory he limited himself strictly to the

ten, but if there happened to be in his case a few which he had brought from home, it would have been silly to be pedantic about it. He was not.

And gradually the cigarettes claimed him. True, he never smoked in his office before luncheon. But he smoked cigarettes in the train on his way to the office and again on the return journey. He smoked cigarettes after dinner. He even smoked one or two occasionally in his dressing-room before breakfast. He no longer went through the farce of carrying his pipe and pouch in his pocket. These old friends

That type may be open to criticism, but it does not become enslaved to habit.

"You're talking nonsense," said Mr. Dumphry. "It's not once a month that I exceed twenty-five in a day, and many days I am under that number. You must remember that for nearly four hours in the morning of every working day I do not smoke at all. I smoked far stronger tobacco in my pipe than I ever get in a cigarette. Taking that into consideration I am really smoking less now than I have done for years."

"I'm glad you can believe it. Then



"'I'm smoking, Dumphry, you see. Hope you don't mind. It's not against the rules of your sacred office, is it?' 'My dear fellow,' said Dumphry; 'it doesn't matter in the least. We shall be going out in two minutes, anyhow.'"

were deposited in a drawer of his writingtable; and the rubber pouch went hard and stiff with bitterness at such neglect.

Pierce Eveleigh felt called upon to remonstrate.

"You know, Ernest," said Pierce, "I'm feeling rather uneasy about having recommended cigarettes to you. It needs a strong man to hold out against the habit. You must be smoking over forty a day now."

And at this Mr. Dumphry was quite justly incensed. He was a man who liked to try something new once a week and generally did try it about once a month.

why do you give yourself the needless trouble of buying your cigarettes in those measly little packets? I buy five hundred at a time and——"

"I know you do, and it's surprising that you've not learned better. The last four hundred cannot be in the best condition. They get dry and fall to dust. I buy ten at a time, wrapped in silver foil, and all ten are good—equal to freshly-made cigarettes. Also I can change the brand frequently. You always smoke the same kind. You might just as well have mutton for dinner every night of your life."

And thus, as not infrequently happens,

did the disciple confound the teacher.

The change in Mr. Dumphry's habits did not pass unnoticed in his family. Mrs. Dumphry approved of it, but then she would have approved of anything that Ernest did. Had Ernest chosen to smoke chopped straw in a hookah, the vase of which was filled with blue-black ink, it is probable that she would have said it only showed how original Ernest wasnever a man to get into a narrow groove, as too many did.

So she found the cigarette much more distinguished than the pipe-in the old days she had agreed that the pipe was much more healthy than the cigarette.

"The only thing," she said to her daughter Barbara, "is that a great deal more tobaccoash seems to be spilled about the house. But that of course is not your father's fault. That is entirely due to the way in which a cigarette has to be constructed."

Queenie observed the change not without self-interest. Nearly a year before she had asked permission to smoke, and Mr. Dumphry, not because of her sex but because of her age, had come as near as he ever got in his parental position to a pointblank refusal.

"I should very much prefer," he said, "that you waited until you were older."

Once Queenie had attempted a surreptitious cigarette, and had thrown it away almost as soon as she lit it. The pleasure of the cigarette did not compensate for the agony of the conscience. She regarded surreptitiousness as dirty, and she liked nothing dirty. But of late on certain special occasions Mr. Dumphry had of his own volition authorised the consumption by Queenie of one cigarette only, greatly to her enjoyment.

But now the time of emancipation seemed to be nigh. For one thing nearly a year had elapsed, and that seems a long time to anybody as young as Queenie. Also, had not her father by his example now directly approved of cigarettes? Her emancipation seemed to be rising like a white star above the horizon.

And these hopes Queenie mentioned to

her married sister, Elsa.
"Maybe," said Elsa. "You're not much younger than I was when he let me start. But," she added with the mature wisdom of twenty-four, "I've noticed that men do lots of things themselves that they don't want anybody else to do. However, I'll give you all the help I can."

Mr. Dumphry was really very interesting at dinner that night. Detaching his gold watch from the chain, he passed it round the table with the request that he might be told if any of them could detect any mistake on the dial. To his satisfaction nobody detected any mistake at all.

"Look," said Mr. Dumphry, "at the number four. It is not written in the correct Roman notation. The number four is represented by four straight strokes. Now how do you think that happened?"

Nobody knew. The excitement became

"Well," said Mr. Dumphry, "that mistake, which has lasted for hundreds and hundreds of years, is really due to snobbery. In the year 1370 King Charles V of France was presented with a clock and was extremely anxious to find some fault with it. The only thing he could think of was to say that the number four, which was correctly inscribed, was a mistake, and that it must be replaced by the four straight strokes."

"Rather a silly old bean, that Charlie," said Queenie.

"I think," said Mrs. Dumphry, "that is hardly the way to speak of a king. Of course he was not an English king, and he has been dead quite a long time now, but still I do like respect to be shown."

"In this case," said Mr. Dumphry, "respect was carried too far. The king's blunder was repeated on every other clock and watch, and that blunder has remained to the present day."

Later in the evening Mrs. Dumphry was saying that the great characteristic of the female was gentleness.

"I suppose," she said, "we see that all through nature."

"I'm sorry to correct you," said Mr. Dumphry, "but that is by no means the case. Among the birds of prey the female is always larger and fiercer than the male. Sometimes it is three times as big as the

"Is that so?" said Mrs. Dumphry. "Well, I've noticed, you know, that whenever I look round and seem to observe something it is quite likely to turn out otherwise.

Another instance occurred later in the evening when worm-holes were discovered in an antique piece of furniture.

"That must be some worm," said Queenie, "to be able to bore holes in wood like that."

"As a matter of fact," said Mr. Dumphry, "it is not a worm. It is a beetle. Tho Latin name for it, if you care to hear it, is Anobium Punctatum."

"It's always been a puzzle to me," said Mrs. Dumphry, "how you come to know all the things you know. For I'm sure I don't and never shall."

On the next Saturday a great event occurred. Once a year on a Saturday in June the Pierce Eveleighs gave a magnificent garden-party. It was not only annual, it was almost monumental. It included a band, and tennis on not less than two courts, and iced coffee and strawberries, and in fact about everything that can be stuffed into a garden-party. Every single member of the Dumphry family was always invited and not once did one of them fail to go. Moreover, Pierce Eveleigh seemed to have some arrangement with the Clerk of the Weather. There might be rain on every other day in June, but there was never rain on the day of that gardenparty.

On that day Mr. Pierce Eveleigh, usually grey, gaunt, and grim, with a mind somewhat occupied with cricket statistics, became bland, urbane, and stocked with amusing conversation. Mrs. Eveleigh—Mouse as she was called—was always an excellent hostess, and as she always had a new dress for the garden-party, on this

occasion she excelled herself.

Mr. Dumphry was presented to Mrs. Budd. Mrs. Budd was a lady of great enthusiasm and middle age. Mr. Dumphry took her off to the refreshment-tent, provided her with tea and cakes, and, lest she should feel lonely, took a little champagne cup himself.

"I wonder," said Mrs. Budd, "if you can help me. A friend of mine has written to offer me an elkhound puppy. I've never even heard of them and I'm sure I've never seen one. Can you tell me if they really do catch elks? Because, of course, we have none here."

"I believe they hunt them in their native country, which happens to be Norway," said Mr. Dumphry.

"Then they must be perfectly enormous

brutes."

"Oh no. They stand about a foot and a half or perhaps twenty inches high. Sharp heads and curly tails. The colour is a sort of greyish brown. They've only recently become popular in this country, you know."

"1 suppose they're very fierce? The name sounds so fierce."

"I don't think so," said Mr. Dumphry.
"I've never had one myself, but I'm told they're naturally good-tempered. Of course they have to be carefully handled.

"I am lucky to have found somebody who knows all about them. And—oh, I say, what is that perfectly charming little

butterfly?"

"He is one of the Lycenidæ," said Mr. Dumphry, who was certainly in luck that afternoon. "He's more generally known as the Common Blue."

"I notice you say 'he.'"

"I do. Because as it happens in this kind, the female is very unlike the male."

"But how interesting. What is the

female like?"

"Well, it's a dark brown with red marks near the outside of the wings and some blue at the base of them. You may find them anywhere in England practically all through the summer. That one probably came in from the grass field beyond the garden. They're mostly to be found where there's grass. As a matter of fact, grass is what their caterpillars live on."

"How refreshing to meet a man who really does know things. You know, my husband is a most learned man, yet he never seems to know anything about anything. By the way, I wonder if you could surreptitiously tell me the time."

"Certainly," said Mr. Dumphry, taking out his watch. "It's just half-past four. Curious, isn't it, the way the four is written on the faces of clocks and watches?"

And he proceeded to convey some more curious information with which, however, we are already familiar.

Mr. Dumphry got one more wonderful chance before they parted. As they approached the tennis-courts, Mrs. Budd noticed Mr. Eveleigh's heavy garden-roller, and also that the roller itself was in two parts, and asked if Mr. Dumphry could tell her the reason why. He could. He explained why this facilitated the turning of the roller. He spoke, almost reverentially, of the differential.

And Mrs. Budd sought out Mouse. "Tell me," she said fervently, "who is that perfectly miraculous man whom you introduced to me this afternoon?"

It may be admitted that the last man or woman whom Mrs. Budd had met was quite likely to be "miraculous"—till disillusionment set in. "That?" said Mouse. "That's Mr. Dumphry. He's an accountant and a very old friend of ours. Very nice man, too, and I like him, but I shouldn't call him miraculous. What makes you think so?"

"Well, my dear, he's simply the best-

proprietor and head master of a successful preparatory school in the neighbourhood.

"My wife, who had the pleasure of meeting you the other day," wrote Mr. Budd, "tells me that you are a great student of nature. I've been wondering if I could persuade you to come up here one afternoon to give my boys a brief informal



informed man I ever met. He's a profound student of nature, and can give you not only the name of any butterfly he sees but its life-history. He seems to have just as good a knowledge of history and mechanics. And," she added as an after-thought, "elk-hounds."

And that led to a brief discussion as to

And that led to a brief discussion as to whether Mrs. Budd should, or should not, accept the proffered puppy.

Two days later Mr. Dumphry had a letter from Mr. Budd, whom he had met only once in his life. Mr. Budd was the

lecture (4.30 to 5) on one of your many topics—say, for example, the Life-history of the Common Frog. I can promise you an appreciative audience."

Mr. Dumphry was badly frightened. The only three things he knew about the frog was that it started as part of something that had, by its resemblance, given him a

distaste for sago pudding, and that it then became a tadpole, and finished as a frog. He wrote a most polite refusal and a modest disclaimer of any special knowledge.

At dinner that night Barbara suddenly him: "What is a Grandsire $\mathbf{a}\mathbf{s}\mathbf{k}\mathbf{e}\mathbf{d}$ Triple?"

"I'll show you my cigarette-card collection. I've only started it three days and I've already got eighty-two different cards. I've put two of my boys on to it, and I'll get the rest of them at work soon."

The collection was housed temporarily in a cardboard box that had originally contained notepaper. Queenie opened the



fore she asked, seemed to find the answer meagre. And although Mr. Dumphry hastened to tell her how the milling on the edge of coins had been designed to prevent a certain form of theft, both he and she felt that this had no special bearing on Grandsire Triples.

And Mr. Dumphry reflected sadly that the path of the well-informed man was beset with gins and snares. At first people flattered you that because you knew some things you knew everything, and then because you did not know everything they came to the unjust conclusion that you knew nothing. What a life!

Next day it happened that Queenie played tennis and subsequently had tea with that beautiful vampire, Eileen Thompson. And afterwards Eileen said:

box and began to turn over the

would have told her was an unladylike

"What are you swearing at?" asked

"Wasn't. It was only something struck

What had struck her was a brief but lucid statement on the back of a cigarette-card, dealing with the number four on the dial of a clock or watch.

On her return Queenie found her father in the garden, seated in a deck-chair with a cigarette. He had gone out to do a little gardening before dinner, but had not yet made up his mind when he would start the gardening.

In reply to inquiry Queenie stated what she had been doing that afternoon.

"Yes," she said, "and Eileen showed me her collection of cigarette-cards. She's been at it only three days, and she's got eighty-two already. There are lots of interesting things on the back of cigarettecards, aren't there?"

"Quite so," said her father without hesitation—so well did he understand the art of retreat. "I have come upon many cigarette-cards that have suggested points to me which have previously escaped my notice. Sometimes I confirm or amplify them by opening the encyclopædia or some reference book, and sometimes not. I often wonder whether when one of these points turns up in conversation I ought to explain that my information—in the first instance, at any rate—was derived from a cigarette-card.

"Certainly not," said Queenie decisively. "Why should you ?-If you know something, that's all to your credit, and nobody's got the slightest right to ask how you know it. Why, you might as well expect enthusiasm. "And I do thank you most a conjuror to tell everybody how he did

his tricks."

"I think you may be right," said Mr. Dumphry judicially. "That analogy of the conjuror is not by any means ineptnot by any means."

That night after dinner in the drawingroom Mr. Dumphry made a portentous announcement.

"Cueenie," said Mr. Dumphry, "I've been discussing a certain matter that affects you with your mother, and she is entirely in agreement with me."

So far there was nothing novel. On any subject on earth Mrs. Dumphry could be trusted to be entirely in agreement with Ernest.

"We do not feel that, considering your age, we should yet give you any indefinite and unlimited permission to smoke. But if you can content yourself with an average of three cigarettes per day in any week we are quite willing to allow it."

"Of course I can," said Queenie with

awfully. Joy and bliss!"

She embraced both her parents with fervour.

then, comparatively prosaically, \mathbf{And} she said: "Now that I've got permission to begin, there doesn't seem to be any reason why I shouldn't start now, does there ? "

Mr. Dumphry smiled benignly, drew from his pocket that very expensive tortoiseshell case, and proffered its contents.



SUMMER OF ST. LUKE." LITTLE THE

THIS is the little summer of St. Luke, The little golden season in between The fullness of the scented summer time And the grey winter days that have to come--The golden Autumn days, so quiet and still, That you can hardly hear the whispering leaves Falling so gently from the tall beech trees. Then you can wander through the woods and fields, And feed, like Eve, on juicy fruits and nuts, And sip the dew from glistening blades of grass; Or watch the spider swing from twig to twig, Or hear the Woodpecker's melodious laugh, And store up dreams of far-off misty woods And berries, crimsoning the tangled hedge For when the fireside claims you for its own.

KATHLEEN M. M. FORDHAM.



"When she began to understand what Silas was really after, she very soon made it clear that nought was further from her wishes than him for a husband,"

SILAS AND ANTHONY

By EDEN PHILLPOTTS

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON

THE feeling that Leonard Dean had for his head man, Silas Roper, puzzled a good few of us, because Farmer Dean was a chap with a pretty shrewd knowledge of character and he'd size up his neighbours tolerable correct most times. But, though we didn't all see eye to eye with him, nobody presumed to question his judgment in the matter till the great affair of his daughter; and then Thorpe Michael took sides and the larger party backed the girl.

Silas had come to "White Gate" Farm as a foreigner from up the country and was only took on as a come-by-chance for hay-making. But he gave such a good account of himself and stood to work so wondrous well that farmer kept him. And a year

later, when old Alec Tozer judged it time to stop and left "White Gate," if Silas weren't lifted to be head man!

He was round about five-and-thirty when this adventure overtook him, and he'd now been along with Dean for five years.

Silas was rather a noticeable man, being above average height and broad-shouldered, with a red poll and tortoiseshell-coloured eyes. He shaved clean, and he kept clean, and his love towards soap and water was one of the things that drew farmer to him, because Leonard Dean had a rare feeling for it. But Silas was a quiet blade and never said much, though a great listener. He'd come to the "Queen Anne" inn and drink his spirits and smoke his pipe of a night and listen to the news; but though

civil to all, he never unfolded his feelings and you couldn't get no forwarder with him. He had a clever tongue when he liked to use it; and Leonard Dean, having an acid sense of fun himself, enjoyed Roper's jokes, which were sharp-edged without a doubt; but they was aimed at human nature in general and inclined you to believe that Silas must have seen a bit of the seamy side of life before he got into clover at "White Gate." he weren't what you might call hopeful about mankind in general, and a fellowcreature's good luck never interested him overmuch, though he could always wake up to hear a bit of bad. Some said he was straight and some doubted it; but he'd got round Dean all right, and, so far as his work went, none could criticise him. He knew farming and he knew what a man could do in eight hours, and he was reasonable in that matter and measured his own strength, and never expected an average hand to put in such a heavy day as he could himself. In fact a treasure, and nobody wondered that Leonard was pleased with him and knew his luck. Indeed, nobody questioned farmer at all till he got a bee in his bonnet and grew dead set on his daughter, and his only one, taking Silas in marriage. But that was pushing friendship too far in my opinion, and most agreed with me.

Leonard Dean was a widow man and Catherine stood to him first in all things; but like a lot of parents of the old school, he wanted to take a hand in his maiden's fortunes, and feeling as he did to Silas, was very sure that if she'd join her lot with his it must mean a very good and steadfast future for her and for "White Gate" when she came to reign there. And so, on her twentieth birthday, he plotted for it to happen very crafty and calculating; but he set his snare in sight of the bird, for Kitty was quite as spry as her parent, and, though a good many sizes smaller in brainpower and experience than Silas, she saw where the wind was blowing, and the cleverest man can't win a woman twenty year younger than himself if she's no mind to have

Farmer he said nought to Catherine, but let Silas know she was husband-high by now and ventured to think it would be a very convenient thing if Roper should chance to be the lucky man; and as the red chap had thought much the same for a good few years and watched the girl grow from a child into an unusual fine woman, he agreed with his master as usual and declared

"It ain't a task I'd have ventured on single-handed," said Silas, "because I'm a bachelor build of man and like to keep my respect for the women. And the less you have to do with 'em the more you do respect.

nothing would give him greater satisfaction.

have to do with 'em, the more you do respect 'em is my view. But I've watched Kitty grow from fifteen to twenty, and a finer piece and one more like her father I never did watch. I'm a good few years older, however, though young for forty and sound as a bell."

"I was eighteen year older than my wife and didn't shorten her life by an hour," said Leonard. "We got on fine to the day of her death, and I reckon you're the very partner for Kitty. You ban't too young to be joyous and take her to a revel now and again, and you've got the sense to balance her nonsense. There's nobody I'd sooner have for a son-in-law, and she thinks

a lot of you, and why not?"

Well, for once Silas, though not a sanguine sort of man, was fired to action, and very cautious he set out to wake a bit of personal regard in Kitty if the thing could be done. But it was too late, because she'd seen the man too oft, and if a girl's been used to a male as a common object in her life from childhood, nine times out of ten she continues to regard him as such, and he can't thrust up into a romantical figure all of a sudden just because he wants to.

In fact, so well used to Silas and his dry jokes and practical disposition was Kitty that it took him a fairly long time to make her see the case was altered; and when, perceiving that he'd got to be plain, he asked her to go for a walk one Sunday and see the blooth on the apple-trees, she found herself a good bit amused. She'd always looked up to Silas as a being only second to her father, and thought him a terrible wise sort of man and a bit mysterious and even creepy, when he said some dark and doubtful thing; but to find him suddenly come down to her level and wishful to treat her as a maiden you could ask to go walkingthat made Catherine laugh a lot in secret.

She was a big girl and handsome in a sort of way—dark and red-lipped and tolerable intelligent. She was kind-hearted and hadn't no use for the boys up till now—a fact that made Silas hopeful; but that was only because the right boy hadn't come along. And when she began to understand what Silas was really after, she very soon made it clear that nought was further from her wishes than him for a husband. He expected that, but just went on his way and pitted his experi-

ence and craft against her natural feelings, while her father watched and cheered on Silas behind the scenes.

"Keep at her," said Dean; "you've got me at your back and I'll bring up my heavy guns presently, if the day looks to be lost."

So Silas held on and Kitty held off.

After the first amusement was over, she found herself a good bit interested in his manners of courting, and so learned a lot about men she never forgot; but after six months of it Silas couldn't honestly say he'd gained much ground, and what he won to-day he lost to-morrow. Kitty grew a bit self-conscious about it by that time because her friends began to poke fun at her, and 'twas she that went to her father with the business after all, and not her father to her. She was a straightforward young woman and didn't mince no words, and more didn't Leonard Dean when he heard her.

Going to church they were when she spoke to him, and her news put the farmer into such a tantrum that he weren't in no mood for prayer, nor yet thanksgiving, and went home without darkening the holy door that Sabbath.

"I'm cruel afraid Mr. Roper's in love with me, father," began Kitty. "He's made it mighty clear, though I couldn't believe my ears for a good bit; and I'll be terrible obliged to you if you'll drop a hint that I don't feel the same to him, and ain't never going to."

"And why ain't you?" asked Dean. "Why the mischief can't you see and feel 'tis a very convenient thing that Silas should love you? Nought more vitty could happen for 'White Gate,' and I'm very wishful for you to take him. He's an honest and upright man and a rare good farmer and nice in his person and manners and a brain in his head, and a true friend of mine. There ain't one this side of the river to hold a candle to him as you well know, and I'll, thank you to look at him with my eyes in future and see the chance of a lifetime and give the chap a helping hand."

"You do surprise me, dad," she answered him, though in truth he didn't surprise her at all, because she had long feared her father was against her. "Surely—surely," she said, "such a thing's contrary to nature, for Mr. Roper's old enough to be my father, and 'tis well known that youth cleaves to youth in such a matter as love and ain't got no use for middle age."

"Middle age be hanged!" he rapped out. "The man's in his prime—so strong as a pair of 'osses and not a grey hair on his head. And he's got patience as well as strength, and patience be vital to every marriage, and nobody won't want it more than you. You're a size larger than most gals and he's a size larger than most men, and a very fine pair you'll make, and there's a great deal more than love goes to marriage I can assure you."

"There may be," said Kitty, "but love will be the first thing that goes to mine, dad—else I'll die a maid, and no harm done."

Then he set upon her most furious, and after he'd rubbed her the wrong way and properly lost his temper and forgot his sense, he changed his note and sang small and made a personal appeal to her feelings and said he'd been a good father and never called upon her to do anything for him until that moment.

But it was too late by now. Kitty brought her modern way of looking at life to the farmer's bygone ideas about what childer owed their parents, and she was a lot flustered and put about to think that, for his own convenience and the good of the farm, Leonard could wish her to marry a man who had never waked nought but respect in her mind. And she said so. But she kept cool over it, while Dean he grew terrible hot again, and when one party holds in their temper and t'other lets it out, more lasting harm be sometimes done than when both let fly. The old man raged and cussed, and the warmer he got the cooler kept his daughter, till at last he used language ill fitting the day and turned his back on her and strode off home, while she went on to And she was sorry for him as worship. well as herself, because her father weren't a very strong man and passion was like to do him hurt.

From that hour the battle raged pretty steadfast, and though it only broke out into open war now and again, the forces was always up against each other and farmer made it clear in a thousand unpleasant ways that he counted to break down Catherine's will-power. He'd have locked her up on bread and water if he'd dared; and meantime Silas pretended that he knew nought of what was afoot and presently offered marriage in very well-chosen and modest words, and told Kitty that she had got to be all his life and hope, in a manner of speaking, and he was cruel wishful to win her

and make her a husband a good bit out of the

She felt glad when things came to a climax like that, because she reckoned that Roper would see the point even if her father didn't choose to do so, and she was mightily civil and pleasant to the man and thanked him for the honour what he'd offered her, but explained, so clear as straight words could do it, that she was heart-whole and fancyfree and in no mind to marry him, nor yet anybody else. She didn't leave him a shadow of hope to hang by; but he'd counted upon something like that and weren't so down-daunted as you might think. Because he knew that farmer was his side most furious, and so he told her that he couldn't take "no" for an answer, such was the force of his feelings, but hoped and prayed that she'd turn it over very steady and go into details, and tell him where he might mend and fashion the order of his going to suit her better, and so on. He said that he felt properly certain they were meant for man and wife, and that he wouldn't leave one stone unturned till he brought her to the same way of thinking. Altogether Silas was a bit too much for Kitty at the time, and when he left her she had a painful sort of feeling that she was like a bird in a trap, with all against her and none on her side.

And then it was that Providence appeared to take stock of the young creature and send another party to fight for her; because just round about that time, while her heart fainted a little against them two determined and cold-blooded men, there came back to Thorpe Michael a very fine chap by the name of Anthony Finch. He was in the Merchant Marine and had nought but an old widowed mother to look after; and he came home for good and all off his last voyage, because his dead father's brother, his uncle, Solomon Finch, had passed away three months afore and left Anthony his fortune. The old man went home very well content, knowing that his three cottages and his orchard and bit of market garden and two hundred a year solid money would be in safe hands with his nephew; and so the sailor returned to take up his life ashore and cut a good figure among his neighbours.

And he weren't home a month afore he fell in love with Catherine Dean, and she turned to him like the shadow of a rock in a thirsty land. He'd say to her long afterwards in fun (though there weren't much fun about Anthony as a rule) that she'd

flown to him for salvation rather than love; but that were far from truth in reality; for hard put to as she might have been, the woman would never have took Finch if she hadn't found her heart go out to him as well as her hands. He was as big as Silas Roper and even stronger—a flaxen man with a red-tanned skin, blue, trustful eyes and a big chin, but a very peaceful-loving disposition. Of course he hadn't got nothing like Roper's experience or understanding, for he was but twenty-six; but he could be what simple people often are, and that's infernal obstinate. He fell in love with Catherine hot and strong, and they was walking out together in six weeks after his return. She didn't make no secret of it either, and when her father, who had heard the truth from Silas, belittled Anthony and poured scorn upon the sailor-man and said he was weak in the head and so on, Kitty took his part, and she did it with pretty vigorous words also. That was afore Anthony offered for her, but she well knew that he meant to, and she also knew that she would say "yes" instanter when he done so. She was leading a life a good bit beneath her dignity now, along of Silas on one side and her father on the other; but hope don't die in the young. and she felt that so soon as Leonard Dean weighed up Anthony and had speech with him and found the terrible solid and fearnought fashion of man he was, he'd come round and all be friends.

So she took pains to tell her father he was mistook in his view of Finch and hoped that he would live to know it. And Dean. he answered, that no man who ever yet went to sea for choice, when he might have bided ashore, could be less than weak in the upper storey; and anyway he told her that he weren't minded to know Anthony better, or have any truck with him. And then young Finch offered himself and all that he'd gotten to Catherine, and she said she was willing and proud to have such a man. There weren't no shadow of romantics about Anthony, and any such tender feelings as the gal might have felt was knocked out of her for the minute by affairs at home; so they wasted but little time in each other's arms at that great hour, but turned their attention to farmer and how best they might win him

Kitty was for biding a bit, for she grew feared when the deed was done; but her lover knew no fear. Such a thing had been left out of him by nature, and he stood for direct action in the matter. His mind moved slow but never faltered, and he said what he'd do, and he done it.

"I be coming to see Farmer Dean after supper to-night, my dinky dear," he told Kitty the day she took him, "and if your father shuts the door against me, I'm terribly sure, I'll pull it off the hinges. Because right and might be my side, not to name you yourself."

And so he came and declared himself in a very deliberate and manlike manner; but if he'd spoke with the tongue of angels instead of his own slow and deliberate mouth-speech, he wouldn't have made no impression but rage on the farmer.

In fact, Leonard happed to be unusual sour-tempered that evening along of a bad debt, so he'd hardly got patience to hear Mr. Finch out. And when he had done so, he made answer mighty short and contemptuous.

"I don't want to be rude to a stranger," he said, "but I should have thought you'd been home long enough to know my daughter's future is pretty well assured. She'd have respected herself better, not to name me, if she'd called in mind my views and intentions for her. She knows 'em exceeding well in any case, and more she knows, that I will have my way in that matter and the house will be out of windows if I do not. She ain't for you and never will be, and I hope you'll get that clear, if a sailor can ever be clear on any subject. And now I'll ax you to be gone and beg you'll leave my darter alone henceforth and look after the ruined thatch on your cottages, where you can spend your time to better purpose. And what more's to say I'll say to her."

He got up from his chair, but Finch didn't move from his. He just stared at farmer and a bit of red came under his tan and his chin stuck out.

"That's no way to talk to a man," he said. "If your darter's in open market, as she tells me, then I've got so much right as another to offer for her, and whatever your views, civility costs nought. Who d'you think I am? I'll tell you. I'm the son of an honest man and the nephew of another; and I'm sound and sane, and no fool though once a sailor. And I'm going to pull the thatch off they houses and put up slates. And, above all, I'm death for hanging on to a thing when I know I'm right. And——"

"Stop!" said farmer, "and take your

great carcase out of here. No good booming at me like a fog-bell, because I won't stand for it. My darter's the matter, not you. I don't care two straws if you be sane, or silly, or honest or otherwise, or what you hang on to. I don't want you—that's all there is to it; and when Catherine Dean said she was free, she lied, because she ain't nothing of the sort. So perhaps you'll rise up out of my chair and get going."

Then Anthony rose up.

"I'm always pretty quick to take a 'int," he said; "but you must understand, master, that this don't end here. You don't want me and I'm sorry for it, because I've got a very good record and be a great learner; but that can't be helped, seemingly. Only I do want your darter, and as she also wants me, it be going to happen so sure as there's stars in the sky."

Then he went his way and Kitty, who was round the corner, heard him go. She reckoned by the sound of her father's voice that things had run pretty crooked; but from her sweetheart's voice she gleaned nought, because he always went along at the same steady pitch and never got above himself, or below himself, more than a mowing machine.

And Dean, he set on to her in a proper tantara when she brought him his evening drink, and he told her she weren't worthy to be his child and did ought to blush for encouraging a hulking, know-nought fool like Finch. He said it was a disgrace to the name and he dared her to see the man again, else worse would come of it. She heard him very patient, for both Leonard and Silas had schooled her to suffer the middle-aged gladly, since it was the will of Nature that they should put their spoke in every wheel, love included. But, though she calmed her parent down and assured him she was a faithful creature and proud of her family name and so on, and invited him to run over her dutiful record from the time her mother died, yet she wouldn't pleasure him in the matter of Anthony Finch and made it exceedingly clear that there was some things a self-respecting maiden couldn't be axed to do even for her father.

So Leonard sulked and cussed and Silas watched and took note of the situation. Of course he was a lot cleverer than his master, and life had long taught him to cut a loss so quick as possible, when such a thing happened to him. He knew very well by now that Catherine was out of reach, and having taken stock of Anthony Finch,

he well understood that the young man belonged to a sort you couldn't brow-beat. Mild as milk and grim as death was Finch, and he had in his character a friendly quality that misguided most men, till they barked their shins against the tough stuff he was made of under his peaceful skin. And Silas sized him up without malice or loss of temper, and knew that Anthony was strong as steel in the matter of Catherine Dean. And so Silas, he had a private tell with Catherine and let it be known that he understood the situation and

was going to withdraw. Dean didn't like him any the better for caving in, however, and told his head man to his face that he was a poor-spirited zany to go down like that afore a raw-boned sailor without enough wit to weigh a penny; but Silas troubled no more about the farmer's opinions now, because he'd laid his private plans for the future and they didn't include his master's comfort by any means. The game he'd hoped for was up; and so the devious chap plotted another game, and, finding he couldn't get all, made secret plans to collar as much as possible. He had looked to wed Kitty and presently be master of "White Gate" with the future assured, and on those terms he had felt well content to bide faithful and hope that Leonard Dean might pass away so soon as convenient. Catherine's parent weren't a strong man and suffered a good bit from bad humours to the breathing tubes. In fact, Silas had given him round about He cared not a five years to live. button in reality for the farmer; and in truth never had cared a button for any created thing but himself. Now therefore the man weighed up the future, saw his dream dead and judged that present gain might out-measure future profit in his case. "White Gate" was sour grapes to him now, and he despised Thorpe Michael and reckoned the time was ripe to cut both.

And while he laid his plans and slept no worse for the wickedness of 'em, Anthony Finch tried once again to see Kitty's father and was refused the right to enter "White Gate." Then he met farmer on the land and trod beside him for a mile most patient and stubborn, till Dean dared him to walk another yard at his elbow and threatened him with policeman for molesting the

public.

After which, Anthony giving the situation due thought, spoke plain to his sweetheart, and she was exceeding pleased to hear his

opinions.

"I'm a man," he said, "as runs by law and order, which most chaps that have followed the sea be content to do; but when you're faced with an outrageous party like Mr. Dean, 'tis up to you to meet him in his own spirit, and if he won't follow the



paths of peace, more can't I. In a word, as he refuses you your lawful rights and denies you permission to marry the husband of your choice, the husband of your choice have got to do something about it, and I've thought it out and be going to take the only course. I'm sorry to do so, but 'tis forced upon me and no reasonable party will ever bring it up against us after.'

"And what be that?" asked Catherine

in a twitter of excitement.

"Run away with you," he said. "It might seem an undignified thing to do and

not worthy of you nor yet me; I ain't going to enjoy it by any means; but if you can light on a usefuller plan I'll be glad to hear tell."

"'Tis a magnificent plan and nothing will suit me better," vowed Kitty. "Dear father's brought it upon himself, and after the first shock, so like as not, he'll come round and see it was all for the best. And Silas be got wise now and will help him to

him and he had to listen, because I catched him alone out on the land and he couldn't shake me off. I told him I'd come and turn farmer and live to 'White Gate' and take up the business under his eye, so as you should be safe when he was gone. I agreed to be a farmer for your sake, so as he should have you under his roof till his dying day, and so on, and he heard the proposals and, I'm sorry to tell you, he used very crooked



"'Get a rope,' said Finch. 'Get a rope so fast as you know how. I'll tell you the tale after.'"

understand that 'twas you or nobody for me.'

"That's as may be," warned Finch.
"Them peppery men can't be trusted to come round very quick after you've bested them. It's going to take a tidy bit of time I shouldn't wonder. I've talked reason to

words at the thought of me coming to live along with him. But you must always remember that he's a free man and his land be free also, and to marry me may cost you 'White Gate.' In his rage he may leave all to Silas Roper. 'Tis only just to you to warn you against that chance, Kitty.'' "What's 'White Gate' to me and all the money in the world without you?" she asked him, and he was a good bit pleased to hear her, and said that in that case he'd make the arrangements without delay

"I'll come for you in my car on Tuesday week at three o'clock in the morning," he said, "and I'll drive you without ceasing so far as Exeter. You'll leave a nice letter saying all is well with you, and I'll drop Mr. Dean a civil note also, though no penman; and then we'll be axed out to Exeter and marry each other the first moment the Church and the Law allows it. After that we'll come back and face the music."

"Three o'clock in the morning o' Tuesday week," said Catherine, because the date and the great adventure was all that particular

interested her for the moment.

"And still as a mouse about it," advised Anthony. "Don't you breathe a whisper to a living soul, for such things, once out, be ruined and might end in a very undignified manner for us all."

"Shall I tell Silas?" she asked. "Him and me be very good friends now and I've never liked the man so well as since he swore

off me."

"Not a word," answered her sweetheart. "There's a lot more to Silas Roper than meets the eye in my opinion. I ain't got no quarrel with him, you understand, because I won't quarrel with nobody; but least said soonest mended in this matter. So keep shut to all—men and women alike —and don't let a soul see by nod or wink what's in the wind. And I hope you'll grasp home that it's out of no disrespect to you I'm taking such a venturesome course. You did ought to have a proper wedding, with the bells ringing and a flare-up all decent and in order; but as that's beyond our reach, owing to Mr. Dean, we must marry by stealth, though it casts me down a good bit to do so."

"I'd like it better that way," she vowed.
"I'm not one for a show, and I love you all the better for taking such a mort of trouble

to get me."

So Anthony planned the needful steps very careful and methodical, being most wishful to do nought as could be considered contrary to right and reason. And, meanwhile, Silas laid his plans also and by a trick of fate, or, more respectfully speaking, at the Will of Providence, both they two men had fixed the same night and hour for their bit of business! Each, you see, had kept

his mouth shut terrible close, and while Silas weren't called to leave any particulars behind him, but quite the contrary, Finch thoughtful like, wrote a very gentlemanly letter to Leonard Dean, which the post would bring him on the morning after the flight, to point out that he need be under no fears for Catherine, because she was safe along with him, and that they ordained to be married, at a place he'd hear about later on, and return as man and wife tolerable soon after.

And then the night came, and the first to get a jar was Anthony Finch; the second to face the astonishment of her life was Kitty Dean; the third to feel a shocking lot of ill-convenience was Silas Roper; while the last to hear about them astonishing

doings was the farmer himself.

Finch brought up his car to the farmyard rear gate so silent as need be, at ten to three on a moonshiny night, with nought stirring but the owls. And then, greatly to his surprise, he saw a dim light dancing round the backyard and the door of Mr. Dean's little garage wide open. His first thought was that Catherine must be doing something reckless; but then he heard a man's footfall and, creeping to the opeway, got sight of Leonard Dean's "Ford" drawn out of its house and Silas Roper terrible busy beside it. The girl weren't due for five minutes and she would come out of the front door, so Finch, he stood by and watched what the other man was up to. A fear struck him that Dean might be took bad and Silas was speeding for the doctor; but he soon saw he was mistook. Silas was speeding all right, but not for no doctor. Roper had a square, solid box in the car, and then, when he'd gone through the back door for half a minute, Anthony slipped into the yard and hid nigh at hand in a corner of the shed. Then out came Silas again, quiet as a mouse, with another bundle, and then he brought out a famous eight-day clock well known to be worth money, because Dean had refused an offer of ten pounds for it. Again he went and came with two famous, ancient candlesticks of Sheffield plate, and then he made another journey and packed an old china soup tureen and some bits of valuable cut glass, in the car where there was sacking laid out to receive 'em.

And so Finch grasped the shocking truth, that Silas was lifting all the farmer's treasures he could lay hand upon and ordained to bolt with the lot and be no more seen! Anthony said afterwards that the godlessness of such a deed properly took

his breath away, because a man like him, all for right and honesty and plain dealing, was cruel shocked to see such a deed happening in his native place. But he soon come to his senses and figured out that he'd been sent along by Heaven at that instant moment, in the cause of right and justice, to confound Silas Roper and his knavish tricks. And so he tackled his task and for the minute forgot all else.

A lantern was hung against the car, to light the malefactor's evil deeds, and Finch waited for him to get another load and hoped it wouldn't be china for fear of ruin when they clashed; but Silas had lifted all he wanted by now and took the cream of farmer's portable goods and all the money in his desk also. He'd waited for certain payments to be made, and struck before the cash went to the bank. But now all was safely gathered into the "Ford," and Silas closed the back door of the house very quiet and started to push the car out into the road; which if he had done he'd have found Finch's "runabout" blocking the way. But his hour was come, and now Anthony leaped out of the dark like an unchained tiger, and as Silas weren't prepared for nothing of the kind, he got worsted at the start. He pulled himself together, however, because he was fighting for his life and liberty, and they went to it heart and soul, as never a pair of heavy-weights afore. neither had no weapon and Finch reckoned he could stand all Silas was able to give him and a bit over. They wrestled all across the yard, and wasted no wind on words, and then Roper got in a kick with his knee and a half-arm jolt together and they very near had Finch going and took his wind and loosed his grip; but the younger held on till the danger was passed, and so properly angered he was by now that he used his might and threw Silas on the stones, so that the elder's skull got a hard rap and he went dazed and out to the world for a while. For twenty-six will always be too strong for forty if there ain't science on the elder side; and while Anthony rose gasping and bloody from the earth, Catherine came in the yard. She was sharp to time and hearing the rumpus, ran forward to see what was happening.

"Get a rope," said Finch. "Get a rope so fast as you know how. I'll tell you the tale after. He's harmless for a minute, because his head bones have hit the ground with my weight atop of him, but he'll come to pretty quick I expect, and I

don't want no more fighting when he do."

She knew where a rope was handy in the outhouse, and when Silas did recover his senses, he found himself like a bluebottle after a spider's done with him. And never a word he said, though what he thought it wouldn't be hard to guess.

Finch weren't one to triumph over a fallen foe, and now he gave God the praise and went to the pump and cleaned his face. Then he told Catherine to call her father, and though a good bit disappointed at the turn of the night's adventure, she obeyed and after five minutes Dean was down in his trousers and greatcoat and boots with his wool nightcap still upon his head.

He broke into a good deal of temper and made to release Silas; but Finch withheld him there.

"You'd best to see what's in your motorcar, Mr. Dean," he said, "afore you set Mr. Roper free, because unless he was taking all your heirlooms and trinkrums and treasures away at three o'clock in the morn by your direction, then——"

"And the plate chest, and your gold Sunday watch, and grandmother's christening mug," broke in Kitty, who had been running her eye over Roper's haul.

Then, of course, the master took in the truth and began to see how the land lay. He badly wished it had been the other way round and Silas had catched Anthony doing evil; but often the people we hate be in the right and them we care about be in the wrong. 'Tis very tiresome but prone to happen. However, Dean saw a ray of hope through the darkness.

"And what was you doing here at this ungodly hour?" he asked Finch; so the young man told him.

"I'd come, all decent and in order, to run away with Miss Dean," he said. "But I'm one of them men what always puts duty afore pleasure, and when I seed my duty staring me in the face, I done it. And now, perhaps you'll tell me whether I'm to fetch a policeman, or go home-along. And Mr. Roper had better have a drop of brandy, anyhow, because I've manhandled him pretty fierce."

'Twas gall and wormwood to Leonard, but there didn't seem two opinions on that subject, so Anthony, he rode off in his car, and Kitty unpacked the other one, and the farmer relieved his feelings by talking to Silas. He didn't give him no brandy either, for he'd got a growing dislike of the man by now, and the more he thought on what a good friend he'd been to Silas, the more vexed he felt that he'd ever trusted such a proper Garden of Eden sarpent.

In the upshot Roper—which wasn't his: real name—got twelve months; and it came out that when he worked in farmer's hayfield and was engaged permanent he'd just come from a "stretch" on Dartmoor, where he larned his job at the prison farms. In fact, He even dared to say that if Roper was to he was proved to be a very bad character indeed, and even Dean confessed that he'd had a merciful escape, especially when he heard as the shocking man had a wife and two children up the country.

Of course, Anthony Finch held on his

unchanging way and got Kitty; and he took up farming in his usual forthright fashion and settled at "White Gate" and shone with a steadfast light. Dean often cussed him behind his back and said it was like living with a steam-roller. He'd forgiven Silas now and still declared that for various conversation he never met his equal. come back, he'd feel in a mind to welcome him and let bygones be bygones; but Silas didn't know that, and he was never seen in our parts no more; and if he had returned, he'd have found Finch in the saddle and a frosty welcome.



OCTOBER.

HE beech leaves spread their cloth of gold Along the upland ways we went; The robins sang their songs of old In undisturbed content.

The hedgerows wore a royal dress, Orange and crimson, bronze and brown; Their feathery, tangled loveliness Led upwards to the down.

The harvest fields were bare of grain, But-symphonies of gold and red-The orchards blazed across the plain. "A dying world!" you said.

But all the glory of the year Is folded close in Autumn's hand; "Not death but life!" her message clear, To those who understand.

L. G. MOBERLY.



"'Well, I call it silly! Martha's babies are much more interesting. All the last ones are quite blind, and they squeak like anything if you touch them."

THE TOUCH OF NATURE

By A. C. T. PERKINS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

"ASH it all! I've lost him."
Professor John Claythorne made
a hasty dab with his water-net,
slipped on the greasy clay of the bank and
one leg plunged knee-deep into the slimy
ooze of the uninviting ditch, whose varied
fauna he was engaged in investigating.
With a rueful smile he extracted the dripping
member, and sitting down on the springy
but nevertheless damp turf of the watermeadow, proceeded to roll up the leg of his
ill-fitting black trousers and divest himself
of a sock, which, it must be confessed, showed

sad need of a woman's care. Wringing this article out and converting it from a state of dripping slime to one of even less pleasant clamminess, he restored it to its place and turned again to his efforts to catch the elusive water-insects.

But though the sun still shone as brightly and the larks still continued to carol, or twitter, or whatever you like to call it, overhead, the day suddenly seemed dull and dreary to Professor Claythorne. I admit that one leg dry and the other damp and clammy—all the damper and clammier

by contrast—is not exactly conducive to high spirits, but Claythorne had all the lofty stoicism of the enthusiastic scientist, and should not have been depressed by such a trifle. Be that as it may, it is an undeniable fact that the antics of the dancing water-beetles ceased to enthral, and after a while he flung himself down on the turf and lit a pipe.

As the fragrant smoke curled upwards, the keenness faded from his kindly brown eyes, and was replaced by a dreamy look of wistfulness, as of one who sought but dared not hope to find. But Professor Claythorne had found—and lost before he knew he had found. So he had turned misogynist and endeavoured to fill his empty soul with the glories of scientific discovery. But God never intended this handsome upright man of barely forty, yet already famous, to be a hater of womankind. The fleeting smile, the humorous curve of the firm yet wellshaped mouth, the flashing twinkle in those tired keen eyes, all gave the lie to so preposterous an idea. But in fifteen years he had hardly exchanged half a dozen words with a woman, save the grim old housekeeper, who kept him more or less fed at the proper intervals, and clothed, if not precisely well dressed.

But it had not been ever thus. Time was when the Professor, a newly elected Fellow of his College, caused more than a passing flutter in many a feminine bosom, and, it must be admitted, was not ill-pleased by the fact. But love—true love—came and left him before he fully realised it had come.

He met Lydia North during a short vacation, shortly after he had been elected Fellow. On his side, at all events, it was a serious case of love at first sight, and he set forth to capture his quarry with the same whole-minded concentration he was wont to display when on the trail of an elusive bacillus. Carried away by the ardour of his wooing, Lydia surrendered at discretion within the month. The remainder of the vacation was ideally happy for them both. Claythorne made more discoveries about Lydia in a fortnight than he had made in the whole realm of Science in all his previous existence. But all good things must have an end, and in this case it came when the Professor again took up the reins of scientific investigation.

He was not the sort of man who could give anything save undivided attention, all his mind and all his soul, to the subject in hand. And so it came about that Lydia found herself temporarily occupying something of a back seat. How could a poor Professor of Pathology write long panegyrics over a dimple when he was absorbed in the task of tracing the exact germ responsible for some obscure disease? But if you have goldenred hair and lips like rose-buds, and have, moreover, been accustomed to unquestioning homage from the cradle upwards, you may be inclined to resent playing second fiddle to a micrococcus. And so it was with Lydia. After one or two more or less ineffectual 'protests against Claythorne's seeming negligence, the embers of passion burnt rather low. One of the usual lovers' tiffs brought matters to a head, and Lydia departed on her way, free once more, while Claythorne—well, the physician tried to heal himself, and failed, for the diagnosis was-broken heart.

Shortly afterwards he heard that Lydia had married, though he never discovered the name of her husband. So he turned misogynist and tried to forget the past in his work.

II.

MUCH of all this, doubtless, passed through the Professor's mind as he lay on the warm, scented turf, puffing at the pipe tightclenched between his teeth. But duty called, and at length he rose to his feet with a sigh, and knocking out the embers of his pipe, returned once more to his aquatic investigation.

But this was destined to be a day of interruptions. He had not been engaged more than a few minutes before he was hailed by a shrill treble from the opposite bank.

"Hallo, you old beggar, what are you up to?"

He looked up and beheld the author of this lady-like remark. A small girl of some nine summers, was seated on an overhanging projection of the bank, dangling in the cool waters of the brook a pair of brown legs which bore mute testimony to the local brambles. A pink sun-bonnet hung down her back, revealing a crop of short reddygolden curls. Her eyes were alight with mischievous curiosity as she surveyed the mysterious operations of the Professor.

"Hallo, Daniel Lambert, and what do you want?" returned Claythorne, presumably in reference to the lady's well-

nourished appearance.

"You looked so lonely, I thought perhaps you might want someone to help you," was the ingenuous reply.

"I do. Won't you come and lend a hand yourself?"

Thus adjured, the lady slipped from her precarious perch, and furling her already abbreviated cotton frock, waded across, with much exclamation and splashing, to the side of the Professor. She displayed much interest in his enraged captures which were biting and clawing at the sides of the glass tubes which confined them.

"What are these funny little chaps with two tails like the kitten of Martha's which

died?"

"Popularly known to Science as Nepa Cinerea," he informed her. "They more usually go by the name of water-scorpions, because they don't sting. They use those jolly little pincers of theirs to dig the water-snails out of their shells."

"Poor snails," she shuddered. "How horrid to be shut up in a horrid little house waiting for a beastly water-scorpion to come and claw you out of it. But what do you want all these silly old things for?"

Seeing his audience so attentive, the Professor launched forth into his favourite subject of aquatic parasites, but before he had got very far, he was forcibly recalled to earth by his imperative assistant.

"Well, I call it silly! Martha's babies are much more interesting. All the last ones are quite blind, and they squeak like

anything if you touch them."

"Who is Mrs. Martha?" queried the Professor, somewhat startled by this domestic misfortune.

His guest squealed with laughter.

"You idiot. She isn't a 'Mrs.' at all, she's a cat. She's a tabby and she's got white paws and the dearest little white tip to her tail. There were some horrid boys trying to drown her, but Mum stopped them and bought her and gave her to me for my very own."

"Oh, I see," said Claythorne, relieved.

"And what did your daddy think of Martha,

when you brought her home?"

"I haven't got a daddy, only Mum, and she's better than all the rotten old daddies

put together."

"I'm sure she is, if her daughter takes after her," said Claythorne, half aloud, visions of another damsel with reddy-gold hair rising before him.

"And do you and Mum live in the

village?" he continued.

"Yes, over there in the little white house," returned his companion, pointing with a grubby finger to a low white-washed cottage,

which peeped through the trees at the far side of the meadow. "And everybody in the village calls me Carrots, because my hair's red. You may call me Carrots too if you like," she added, with a burst of generosity.

"Right-o, Carrots," responded the Professor, "and now, as the world is probably waiting with bated breath for my latest discovery on the accidental metazoan parasites of Dytiscus, let us to work. Just catch a hold of this rope and I'll show you

how to use a drag-net."

Thereafter the carolling of the larks overhead was only marred by the grunts of the Professor as he hauled in the heavy dragnet and the squeals of delight which emanated from his companion, when some more than usually repulsive-looking insect was brought to light.

Suddenly Carrots awoke to the fact that

the evening was drawing on.

"Crumbs!" she ejaculated, "I must be pushing off, or I shall get strafed like anything. I can help again to-morrow, can't I?"

"Rather," replied Claythorne. "We'll beat these hedges and see if we can't find some weevils. Good night, Carrots."

"Cheerio, old bean," she called over her shoulder, and slinging the sun-bonnet over her arm, set off for home at an undignified canter.

As for the Professor, he packed his traps, lit his pipe and tramped slowly back to the inn. Somehow the grass seemed greener, and the thrushes, which had now replaced the larks, sounded quite hilarious. But above all these, the sun setting in the west, bathed in tawny splendour, conjured up in Claythorne's mind the most entrancing visions of certain reddy-golden hair.

III.

The intimacy between Carrots and the Professor grew rapidly. Possessed of an insatiable desire for new knowledge of every kind, she was ever plying the grave, silent man with all manner of questions. And he, for his part, found a peculiar pleasure in explaining to his small guest the marvellous mysteries of the abundant Nature, who displayed her wonderful gifts so lavishly all round them. And I think that, as the friendship between the two became cemented, some of that self-same cement got into the chinks of the poor Professor's heart, and that ill-used organ once more began to act as a coherent whole and not

merely as the mainspring of an emotionless machine for plumbing the unexplored

depths of Science.

"Uncle Jack," asked Carrots one day (he had soon been promoted to the avuncular relationship by mutual adoption), "what is it that makes all the green things come up in the Spring and then when Summer is gone, kills them all again?"

"Well, Carrots," he replied, "you see, the old Earth loves all the living things, which dwell upon her, and gives them the soil in which to grow, and the rain to feed and refresh them. And the green things

are grateful and send out their flowers, with their beautiful colours and sweet scents, as a token of their gratitude. But the Earth is very, very old and has to work hard to keep them supplied with food and shelter, and after awhile she is exhausted and can no longer provide her children with all the things they need. so Winter comes and they seem to die, but really they are only put to sleep by Nature so that the poor tired Earth may have the chance of a little rest. And all through the Winter she is regaining her lost strength. But she is very

lonely, and the rains, and winds and frosts of Winter are really the poor old World mourning for the friends she has lost. But Mother Nature understands all this and heals her wounds and gives her rest. And then when she is again fit for it, Nature wakens her sleeping children one by one and sends them back into the care of old Earth once more. And that is why we call it the Spring, for Life has sprung again from the seeming Death of Winter."

Perhaps Carrots did not understand all of this, nor the allegory which it represented in the Professor's mind, but with the swift intuition of childhood, she sensed the sadness in Claythorne's tone, and deduced something of its cause, for she asked in an unusually serious tone:

"Is there ever a Winter for men and women, Uncle Jack, when the things that they love are taken away to give them a rest?"

"Yes," he answered, "we all have a

Winter sooner or later, but sometimes we are not patient like the old Earth, and then Mother Nature may never send the Spring to us at all, for we are not fit for it."

The Professor had not been idle during this discussion, for with his habitual energy, he was simultaneously engaged in beating for insects the hazel bushes which splashed the hedgerow with their vivid green. Carrots, seated on the top bar of the ancient gate in the corner of the field, was watching with eager interest the progress of his search. Suddenly the Professor uttered an eager cry, as some more than usually choice specimen fell into the sheet spread on the ground beneath. Hearing his exclamation, Carrots jumped from her perch in order to inspect



old nail sticking out from the gate-rail and she fell heavily to the ground, one of her legs doubled beneath her body. Overcome by the sudden pain, she cried out sharply. Then the world swam in a green haze before her eyes, and she knew no more.

Hearing her cry, Claythorne hastily ran and picked her up. As the golden-red head fell limply back in his arms, something snapped in his heart, and for a moment seemed to stop it beating. And then a sudden flood of emotion swept away all the hard cynicism out of his soul, and he buried his head in the glowing locks.

"Oh, Carrots," he moaned, "my poor little beloved."

But he was not the man to waste time in useless inaction, and bearing his fragile burden swiftly to the brook, which twinkled through the meadow, he dashed the cool water in her face and soon saw the glow of returning consciousness. He turned his attention to the injured limb, and saw immediately that the leg had been broken, though the fractured end had fortunately not been seriously displaced. Swiftly improvising a splint from the handle of his collecting-net, he bandaged it in position with the net itself. As he finished the task, Carrots uttered a low sigh, and the blue eyes opened flutteringly.

Her first thought was not for herself.

"Oh, Uncle Jack," she exclaimed. "What happened? Were you dreadfully frightened?"

He made no reply, but seizing her in his

arms, hugged her passionately.
"Well, old lady," he said at length, "it's nothing very serious after all, but you will have to keep that poor leg quite still for a little while. I'll take you along to Mum, and we'll soon make you comfortable."

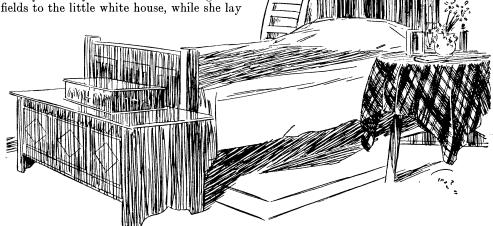
Very tenderly he carried her through the

"I don't think so, sir."

"Show me to her room, then," he ordered, "and I will make a thorough examination. I am a qualified medical man."

She showed him up to the little lavenderscented room, looking out on the fields where Carrots and he had spent so many happy hours. Laying his burden gently on the bed, he removed the splint, and as gently as possible manœuvred the limb until the





"The little lavender-scented room, looking out on the fields where Carrots and he had spent so many happy hours.'

quietly in his arms and uttered no sound, for, though the injured limb was throbbing violently, she was not of the breed that whimpers when it is hurt.

A scared-looking maidservant opened the door.

"This young lady has met with an accident and injured her leg," he said. her mother at home?"

broken ends of the bone were in position again. But the sudden pain made Carrots wince and she clenched her tiny fists tightly, to shut in the cry of pain that rose to her

"There you are, Carrots," he said, when he had finished. "You must keep that leg just as still as a mouse and it will soon be all right again."

A world of gratitude shone in her starry

eyes.

"Oh, Uncle Jack, you are clever," she quavered, "and it doesn't hurt any more now."

He heard the front door open.

"That's Mum," said Carrots.

"I'd better just go down and see her." He turned and went down into the little sitting-room. A slight, almost girlish figure stood in the light of the open doorway, and the rays of the afternoon sun danced through an aureole of golden-red hair.

" Lydia!"

" Jack!"

"My dear! I never knew."

He took a step forward and she was in his arms. After awhile he released her and told her gravely and tenderly of the accident which had befallen Carrots.

"The ways of God are very wonderful," she said, when he had concluded. "If this had not happened, you would have gone away without ever seeing me, and I should never have known that you had cared all the time."

Hand in hand, they went up to the little lavender-scented room. Lydia flung her arms round the pathetic little figure.

"Carrots, poor little darling! Does it

hurt very much?"

"Not now, Mum darling. Uncle Jack sent the pain away! Oh, I do love him."

The Professor took one of the little hands

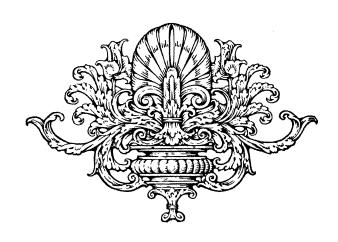
gently into his great paw.

"Carrots dear," he said, "what would you do if Nature sent you a Daddy as well as a Mum?"

The old spirit flashed in her blue eyes.

"Oh, I know what you mean, you old beggar. It's you. And I'm awfully glad."

As a small arm stole round his neck, the Professor felt the touch of Nature calling to life the seeds of love, which all these years had lain sleeping in his soul.



OCTOBER'S TASK.

TATHEN crisping leaves of summer's throng Have lightly left their jocund play And spread in layers of gold along The solitary woodland way;

When frosted webs enmesh the fern, And starlings wail and swifts are gone, And crimson all the sumachs burn, October's task is nearly done. DOROTHY ROGERS:

MARJOLAINE

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

ARJOLAINE rose up suddenly from behind the hemlocks and came forward with extended arms. Catching sight of her Raoul André stopped dead with a cry of shocked alarm, stood for a moment thunderstruck and, turning, ran for his life. Méridor, with a yelp of terror, tucked his long tail between his legs and followed his master, whimpering as he fled.

Five minutes previously Raoul André St-Bellac-Dupin had been in an extremely bad temper. To one acquainted with his usually placid temperament this would have seemed a portent in itself, the more so that he was enjoying a day's sport and, which is perhaps even more important in the Département of the Deux-Bièvres, knew himself for the perfect image of the sportsman. That is to say, he wore a knickerbocker suit of brown velvet, with very large pockets and tight breeches, the coat edged with braid and with large horn buttons. His yellow boots, reaching above the knee, were accurately modelled to display the trimness of ankle and calf. Above his green felt hat, pointed in front, waved gallantly a burnished cock's feather, and the game-bag slung at his side had a leather fringe about it which might have graced the pages of Fenimore Cooper himself. Over his shoulder was a doublebarrelled shot-gun, direct from Saint Quentin, and at his heels a genuine "Bleu d'Auvergne," that breed of "sporr-dogue" which, somewhat resembling an English pointer, differs from it in that it is of a pale whity-brown complexion, liberally peppered with small bluish-black spots such as would drive an English "chien de race" to instant suicide, but makes your "Bleu d'Auvergne" hold his nose very high in the air indeed.

Another reason which should have rendered Raoul André supremely happy was, that snugly reposing in the depths of the Peau-Rouge hunting-bag was a noble quarry, including three blackbirds, a "grive" and

two robin redbreasts—a bag well above the average. For truth to tell, not in the neighbourhood of the immortal Tartarin himself was there a greater dearth of what we usually call game than in the pleasant woods and pleasanter hilly pastures that make up the commune of Mesnil-le-Hameau, in the Arrondissement of Chateauluzac in the Département of the Deux-Bièvres. Even the sparrows have long since learned to dread the prowess of the Nimrods of Biort, and were it not that the law of migration brings occasional rash wanderers into the district sport would be poor indeed.

All these things considered and added to the fact that Radul André was that evening to preside at the annual "apéritif d'honneur" of the Fraternal Society of the Hunters of the Deux-Bièvres and was to make a speech accompanied by an obligato on the cor-de-chasse by the Society of the Fanfares of Biort, you would have been surprised had you observed the gloom which mantled his usually smooth brows as he came at last to the end of the ploughland and pushing back the branches made his way cautiously into the green depths of that Forest of the Four Columns which, historically speaking, is the pride of the Département, if not of France herself. For there, where now are the broken, fallen pillars which give the forest its name, was once the hunting-box of that good King Dagobert whose nether-garments -but that, after all, has very little to do with Raoul André St-Bellac-Dupin. Besides which, Marjolaine is waiting for us.

Raoul André then, despite his correct attire, his successful day's sport and his anticipated triumphs, was decidedly in a bad temper. And, to make no secret about it, a woman was responsible. That she was a young woman, and an extremely attractive young woman at that, made things no better, rather worse indeed, seeing that Raoul André was in love with her. For that matter he ought to have been

betrothed to her, but for the abominable new-fangled ideas introduced into France by her Allies during the Great War, Allies who, whatever their military merits, are sadly lacking in that innate sense of the proprieties which is inborn in the heart of every well-brought-up young Frenchman, especially if he live in the provinces. It was bad enough while they were confined to Paris, which, as every native of the Deux-Bièvres knows, is a sink of iniquity; unfortunately as the post-war years have passed they have spread far and wide, as insidiously as one of those heath-fires which, creeping among the roots, never shows itself in the open until the mischief is done, until to-day not the remotest Département is altogether immune.

Worst of all, as Raoul André reflected sadly while he tramped the furrows, they had even shown themselves at Les Lilas —the Chateau, as it is locally called by courtesy, though it is actually no more than a pleasant country-house standing in a pleasant orchard. Now Les Lilas, from the two little "tourelles" which flank its expressionless white face to the neat little "jardin anglais" which divides it from the Biort-St-Marceau road, is a very monument to the proprieties, and so for that matter were once the three Mesdemoiselles Le Courtier who lived in it along with their orphan niece Desirée. Accordingly when Monsieur Dupin Père and Madame his wife, after careful review of the eligible young ladies of the neighbourhood, approached the Mesdemoiselles with the formal request for their niece's hand and dowry for their only son, the matter might, certainly ought to, have been considered settled, subject only to due negotiation concerning the appropriate dot. But then it was that the accursed—pardon, but the word is not at all too strong—the accursed influence of the Anglo-Saxon invasion showed itself.

To trace it to its lair you must go back a long time, to the early days of the War, in fact. Mademoiselle Hortense, the youngest of the three sisters, though now somewhere in the fifties, was a good deal younger in those days of course and felt called, like many another, to do what she could for her country. Her duty led her among other places to the town of Doullens, somewhere in the North, where was a hospital, and among her patients, unfortunately, were English and Australian and American soldiers. Thence somehow later

came about a visit to England, to the parents of one of the poor boys who had died blessing her name, and by the time Mademoiselle Hortense returned home, the mischief was done. Even at her age, as was whispered in awe-struck tones by the old ladies of Biort, she would frequently appear dressed in heavy boots and mannish tweeds; she thought nothing of walking, entirely without escort, all the way from Les Lilas into Biort and back; worst of all, she had become a convert to the casual marriage convention of the "Angliches," whereby young people marry whom they like and when they like and how they like without even consulting their parents about it or considering for a moment how they are going to live afterwards.

Or again, Mademoiselle Hortense returned an avowed devotee of "Le Sport" in its most pronounced form. Not, that is to say, of such sports as are becoming to a French gentlewoman, as, for instance, manille, or le croquet, or even-for we must move with the times—le tennis. Not a bit Mademoiselle Hortense openly preof it. ferred—vicariously, it is true—such sports as by their very nature impose the risk of bloodshed, if not of worse. Not even football was brutal enough for her; she would talk of nothing but mountainclimbing, dwelling with a horrid zest on crevasses, glissades and broken ropes and limbs, of exploring among savage tribes, of the chase of the tiger, the bear or the wild bull of the plains. It is true that she stopped short of any endeavour to tempt such high adventure; at least she railed unceasingly at the young men of the day, who were, she said without shame, no more than degenerates. And she would instance the Fraternal Society of the Hunters of the Deux-Bièvres as a case in point, declaring that its members, though capable of any heroism when faced by no more fierce a foe than a blackbird or a partridge, would show a very different mettle were a lion or a wild elephant in question.

And the Devil of it—again pardon, but there is no other word to express the feelings of Raoul André—the Devil of it was that she had infected her niece Desirée—a young girl of the impressionable age—with her own heterodox ideas. Desirée, indeed, being in every way a "jeune fille bien elevée," did not express herself so strongly—but when it came to the point—to Monsieur Dupin Père's proposal, that is to say—it became only too evident.

have found nothing against his moral char-

acter; that he had a sufficiency of brains was shown by the more than respectable

degree in chemistry he gained at the Univer-

sity of Belfort. Last but not least, M.

Dupin Père, who was something of an

eccentric and could afford to be, was ready,

not only to settle a handsome income upon

his son on his marriage-day, but to accept

To a mother—or aunt—of real understanding there could have been nowhere to be looked for a suitor more desirable than Raoul André. It is true that his father was a Dupin, and Dupin is not an aristocratic name, but when it carries with it the proprietorship of the great Lafeuille ironworks at Biort it acquires a new significance. For that matter his mother was a Saint-Bellac, and the Saint-Bellacs, if they

a purely derisory dot with a daughter-in-law do not boast of to his liking. Nor had the Mesdemoiselles Le Courtier the nobiliary anything very much to boast about, if it came to that. Their family was well enough, though it was understood that their maternal grandfather, from whom descended their heritage of Les Lilas, was no more than a bill-broker in the days of the First Empire. Their income was sufficient and wisely invested, it was said, in foreign securities, under

"Raoul André was a good runner, though not so good as Méridor, who passed him like a flash and was seen no more that day."

particle nowadays, must certainly have possessed it in the past and—it is whispered by the envious—if their wealth goes on increasing will, as certainly possess it—by appropriation—in the near future. Nor to Raoul André himself could any possible exception be taken. He was undeniably good-looking, delicately and slenderly built, with the fine eyes of a poet and a dainty little moustache as delicately pencilled as any fair lady's eyebrows. The most jealous scrutiny could

the advice of their cousin, the eminent and patriotic statesman. They were received by the best families; kept a pair-horse carriage—even to-day the automobile is unfavourably regarded in the Deux-Bièvres; they were sufficiently "dévotes" and, in a word, held their heads high enough. But—I ask you!

Whether or no, when M. Dupin Père made his formal proposal on behalf of his son, its reception was not such as he had expected and Raoul André had hoped. Mademoiselle Le Courtier, as the doyenne of the family—prompted, there could be no doubt, by the more strong-minded Hortense—replied that, greatly as they felt themselves and their niece honoured by an offer so flattering, they could put no constraint upon Desirée, that, in a word, it was for her to accept or refuse as the state of her affections might decide.

It would have served them right—as Madame Dupin declared on the way home—to have then and there declined to consider the matter for another moment. But Dupin Père was, as I have said, an eccentric and, to his wife's indignation and his son's despair, insisted that Mademoiselle Le Courtier had the rights of the matter and that if Raoul André desired to wed the so charming Mademoiselle Desirée, it was for him to win her, and that was the end of the matter.

Figure to yourself the chagrin, the perplexity, the increasing desolation of Raoul André, forced into such a position. he loved Desirée with all his heart, he had no doubt whatever—nor need you have any. That she did, or ever would care for him, was another question. Certainly, though she received him always with the polite amiability due to their position in life, he could not pretend to himself that she showed any signs whatever of a closer interest. Did he endeavour to steer the conversation towards the human affections she displayed an almost uncanny skillas it seemed to him-in directing it to subjects less intimate. And, following her aunt's unfortunate example, she showed herself interested above all in deeds of heroism and adventure. She said once that could she only have spoken with M. Grivois—the famous lion-slaver—she could die happy. Or again, that the convention of certain savage tribes of, I think, the Congo, whereby no young man is considered worthy of consideration, either by man or woman, who cannot produce the spoils of some savage enemy, slain in single combat, was eminently sensible. All this from a young lady of good family in the Département of the Deux-Bièvres! Again I say—I ask you!

It was while pondering these things unhappily that Raoul André, entering the Forest of the Four Columns, came face to face with Marjolaine, and seeing her, turned and ran, followed by his faithful "sporrdogue" Méridor. When you realise that

Marjolaine was a bear you will understand why, even though you contemn. After all—if you yourself were walking in a forest and you met a bear, what would you do? Come now—remember the classic tragedy of Algy and consider before you speak.

Raoul André was a good runner, though not so good as Méridor, who passed him like a flash and was seen no more that day. But a forest is not a good place for footraces; there are slippery places and fallen boughs and little channels cutting their way across the path. André, turning his head, to see if he were followed, did not notice a tree-stump in his path, and tripping over it, fell full length, the breath driven from his body. Even in falling, the dread reality flashed through his brain: the monster, on all fours, was rapidly shuffling after him.

He struggled desperately to rise, but it was too late. Before his limbs were under control, his strained ears caught the soft scuffling of the great paws over the fallen leaves: another second and the beast's hot breath was fanning his cheek.

He had read somewhere that the savagest beast will not attack a dead man. With a desperate effort of will he forced himself to lie still, his face to the ground. could hear those scuffling paws all round him: the brute must be selecting the part of him on which to begin. The panting breath came nearer and nearer to his head. Suddenly—a-o-o-a-h—what was Something—something warm—and smooth —and moist—was touching him—the back of his neck-his ear-his cheek. And at the same moment he became aware of a voice—a human, woman's voice. "Marjolaine!" it was crying breathlessly, "Marjolaine!! Viens donc-naughty one! Come -or you shall taste of stick for a week. Come—I say."

Realisation came slowly to Raoul André. Still trembling, though with a growing sense of safety, he turned, slowly, upon his back and, more quickly, sat up and gazed about him. Evidently the bear had no further thought of molesting him. Instead it had risen upon its hind legs and was executing a solemn, shuffling dance, if dance it were, turning solemnly round and round in the little open space before him, regarding, with an evidently anxious eye, the little switch which an elderly woman, dressed in a fanciful costume of the Gipsy fashion, was shaking at it.

"Naughty-naughty Marjolaine!" the

old woman began again, and then, catching Raoul André's eye, she turned to him. "It is—it is that she is too affectionate. She—she was anxious only to embrace you."

Raoul André sprang, still breathless, to his feet. "The—the savage brute——!" he began.

The old woman began to laugh. "Savage brute, indeed," she cried shrilly. "Why, my little monsieur! It is only little Marjolaine—the baby. It is, as I tell you, that she is too affectionate. Her desire was

only to embrace you."

"It is fortunate for her," said Raoul André grimly, "that my gun was unloaded. Otherwise— What is more—she would have deserved it. Yes—and you also—it is an infamy—a dirtiness—more—it is contrary to the laws to bring savage beasts and let them loose in a State Forest, to the alarm of children—yes—and delicate ladies. I have but to call the 'garde champêtre'—and you would soon learn the penalty for such a breach of the laws."

It seemed as though the old woman were in her turn somewhat alarmed. "But indeed, sir," she protested. "She is the least savage of anything you can imagine. Do I not say she is no more than a baby. And of a gentleness——! Come, ma mignonne, stop dancing and salute the

gentleman again."

Raoul André realised shamefacedly that Marjolaine was not nearly so large as his first alarms had pictured her. She was not indeed so very much larger than Méridor and of a comfortable adiposity, very evident while she danced, which had nothing savage about it. Obedient to her mistress's command, she shuffled quickly towards Raoul André, still on her hind legs, and laying a fore-paw on either of his shoulders, extended a long red tongue towards his face, her eyes, small and piggy though they were, expressing a perfect amiability.

"Enough," cried the old woman. "And now—to show that you are no enemy to the laws, show the gentleman how you are ready to die for the Republic. Pr-u-u-t!"

Even as she spoke Marjolaine withdrew her tongue, fell obediently upon her four feet, collapsed upon her side and lay, stretched out, as dead a bear, to all appearance, as could anywhere be looked for. "You see," said the old woman, "it is as I said."

"It is—it is then—a performing bear," suggested Raoul André, his natural quick-

ness of perception still somewhat in abey-

"Performing! But—my faith—it is of a natural genius! Never has there been such an incomparable artiste—as I, who have known many, can tell you. Not even her father, Valentin, who was the first ever to beat a tambourine while standing upon his head, was her equal. To see her ride a bicycle! To see her walk upon the slack wire, as though she had never walked anywhere else in her life! To see her opening a bottle—using her own corkscrew! An artiste? I should say so indeed."

Raoul André was thinking. "And—you live?" he inquired, thoughtfully eyeing Marjolaine, who, released from the impassivity of death, was industriously turning somersaults round and round the little clearing, one bright little eye continuously turned towards her mistress for approval.

"Live? Why—here—and there—in a word, everywhere. We are for the present performing with the Cirque Masanello, encamped for the day upon the high road, in the direction of Saint Lorac. To-morrow we are to arrive at the Fair of Larches. Marjolaine here, the journey incommodes her. She suffers from an affection of the liver, to which all her family are subject. Her father, indeed, died from it, not two months since. Fortunately, it was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles and I was able to sell his body to a perfumer—for hair-grease, you understand."

It seemed that the old woman was lacking in sensibility, for she laughed suddenly and reminiscently. "As for his skin," she went on. "I made an excellent bargain over that. It was very fine and thick, and figure to yourself, there was a fellow bought it from me for a great price—on the condition that three rifle bullets were fired through the head. He was, it seemed, a hunter, and he proposed to take back the skin with him—he lived, it seemed, in Paris—and to show it to his friends as one which he had himself shot in the Carpathians."

"What was that?" cried Raoul André suddenly. "What was it you said? I ask you to repeat what you were saying." And when she had obeyed: "You are going to Larches, you say? Would it be possible for you to return here—with the bear—in say four days?"

"To return here? But---"

"It would be to your advantage, of



course. I would pay—well, there would be no difficulty about that." "But I do not understand."

"I will explain. Listen now to what I have to say to you."

And with a hasty glance round, as though fearing that even there might be eaves-



"' Do not touch her, Monsieur! For Heaven's sake do not touch her."

into the old woman's ear. Marjolaine, for her part, grown tired of somersaults, lay down on her back and went to sleep with her fore-paws folded over her face.

Upon the day following, a sinister rumour

Hunters of the Deux-Bièvres in the Café of the Triumphs of Agriculture overnight. A savage bear, a ferocious grizzly from the Rockies, said to be the largest and fiercest ever held in captivity, had escaped, it seemed, from a travelling menagerie some

days before and after doing incredible damage in various parts of the country, decimating flocks and herds, devouring children to the number of seven and destroying a whole family in a distant commune, had now made its way to the Forest of the Four Columns, where it was lurking in some hidden fastness, only awaiting its opportunity to sally forth and carry desolation through the smiling fields of the Deux-Bièvres. There could be, in a word, no doubt about the facts; it only remained to be decided what steps should be taken to abate the scourge.

Before the day was past the decision was The Fraternal Society of the Hunters of the Deux-Bièvres rose to its opportunity. The citizens of Biort might rest secure; before the day was out the bear's skin should be produced for all to see. battue was promptly organised—no fewer than forty of the keenest chasseurs of the Département volunteering their services for the dangerous duty. With them went eighty-four "sporr-dogues" of varying pedigree and thirty-seven different brands of lethal weapon, from a Mauser rifle to an American automatic. Some of the keener spirits even carried spears and one a sabre, though this was held rather to savour of vanity as indicating a wish for combat at close range.

For three days the hunt continued: every inch of the forest, to say nothing of the fields surrounding it, was quartered, so that not a mouse could have escaped Three times the hunters returned baulked of their prey and three whole evenings were given up to fierce discussion, in the large room of the Café of the Triumphs of Agriculture, as to the best way to tempt the shaggy nightmare from its hidden fastness. And it was upon the third of these evenings that Raoul André Saint-Bellac-Dupin announced that stern decision which was to gain him lasting fame throughout the length and breadth of the Départe-The measures so far taken had been, he insisted, based on a lack of knowledge of the habits of the greater carnivores. grizzly of the Rockies, however formidable in itself, was at heart a coward. Against one man it would indeed advance undaunted, but faced by an army—an army of heroes and at this point Raoul André bowed gracefully to right and left amid a hurricane of applause—faced, he repeated, by a band of heroic brothers—it would turn and flee, hiding itself in forest depths where none

could hope to find it. No-and again no. Faced by the hideous danger which overhung their wives—and sisters—and little, little children—(and at this point sobs were heard and down many a bearded face trickled the sympathetic tear)—there was but one thing to be done. One man-and one alone—must adventure himself—seek out the Horror in its hidden lair-and there destroy it. There was a pause while a hundred active minds pictured the dreadful combat and then arose a mighty cheer such as had not been heard in Biort since Armistice Day-a cheer which was redoubled when Raoul André went on to declare —modestly but firmly—that upon himself devolved the duty of self-sacrifice. Youyou others, he pointed out, have wives and fiancées and children—yes, those little, little children who are the hope of our beloved France, "franche et loyale," holding the line of civilisation in defiance to a thousand jealous enemies. He went on to make some reference to the conspiracy hatched abroad to bring about the fall of the franc—which need not here detain us and concluded by falling, weeping, into the arms of the Vice-President of the Society, who embraced him with answering tears, while all present burst unanimously into the "Marseillaise." There was not a dissentient voice. After all, what the deucewe cannot all be heroes and we are for the most part family men in Biort.

The hunting-horns of the Society of the Fanfares of Biort played all night in the Grand Place in Raoul André's honour and accompanied him early in the morning to the outskirts of the city when he started on his perilous errand. He had refused to take Méridor with him, fearing that he might disturb the game prematurely, but he accepted as companion and to carry his rifle and carnassier, one Philémon, a choice sufficiently unexpected. Philémon, in fact, was a shambling youth, without any surname so far as was known, who was tacitly accepted as the town idiot and lived. harmlessly enough, on the charity of the citizens. But, as Raoul André pointed out, he had an intricate knowledge of the Forest of the Four Columns, wherein he was accustomed to spend much of his time, and, as Raoul André did not mention, perhaps forgetting it, he was also an especial object of compassion to the Mesdemoiselles Le Courtier and their fair niece Desirée, to whose kitchen he was a frequent and a

welcome visitor.

Followed then by Philémon, Raoul André topped the hill that leads up from the town's end, stopped for a moment to wave his hat and to hear the last triumphant flourish of the hunting-horns, and disappeared from the eyes of his admiring fellows. Nor was anything more heard of him until late that afternoon when Philémon, half fainting with fatigue, rushed into the Café of the Triumphs of Agriculture, agog with news of the most terrible. This was what had happened, as he related vividly, under the influence of the innumerable grogs and "petits verres" and "coups de blanc" lavished upon him by his eager auditors. They had penetrated but a little way into the forest when suddenly, just as Monsieur Raoul had given Philémon his orders to accompany him no further lest he run into unnecessary danger, the Horror reared its head. From behind a thick growth of hemlocks in a clearing, rose suddenly and without warning a monstrous Beast. It was such a one as Philémon had never even imagined—high -from his gesture it must have been at least nine feet high, with great claws as long as your arm and teeth—oh—a veritable giant of fury and rage and-and-and-At least—for what it was, it had risen up on its hind legs, and with extended claws, roaring like a thunder-cloud, the blood dripping in anticipation from its ravenous jaws, advanced to meet its enemies. In a calm whisper Monsieur Raoul ordered Philémon to leave him, to fly, to save himself. But Philémon's legs refused their office; he remained there, rooted to the ground, gazing, open-eyed, fascinated, at the oncoming death. And then-in a moment—" Pan! Pan! Pan-pan!!" M. Raoul's trusty rifle spoke. And, even as the shots rang out, the infuriate brute faltered stopped, struggled for a little, beating the air with its great claws, and fell prone among the crushed hemlock branches.

That was all. All at least that he could tell them. Actually one other incident had threatened to mar the death-scene of the Terror of Biort. For as Raoul André advanced upon the fallen foe he intended, for subsequent record by the admiring Philémon, to stand for a moment, with his foot upon the body of his quarry. But even as he lifted his foot for the purpose, came a hissing whisper from behind a neighbouring tree-trunk, "Do not touch her, Monsieur! For Heaven's sake do not touch her. If you put your foot upon her

stomach it will tickle her and she will forget that she is dead." But of that, of course, Philémon knew nothing.

As to the return of the hero, again he could give no satisfactory information. M. Raoul had, in fact, sent him away almost at once, saying, as far as Philémon could understand, that he himself would procure a waggon from the charcoal-burners' camp somewhere in the forest and remove the body. What he meant to do with it and when Biort might hope to rhapsodise over the spoils of victory Philémon could not say—having, by that time, imbibed a great deal more than was good for him; he was, in fact, unable to say anything more intelligible at all.

Nor was Raoul André himself, when he appeared the following day, in the Café of the Triumphs of Agriculture, more explanatory. It was a small thing, he insisted: it was absurd to make a fuss about such a thing. In a day or two—well—they would see what they would see. But for the present—well—he was tired and he would beg them to excuse him. And the next day he was from home on a business journey, it was said. And the next. And the next. In this, of course, he risked a loss of popularity. Modesty after all, is all very well, but, look you, there are certain duties a man owes to his friends.

Still more surprising would it have seemed, to one familiar with these things, that for a whole week Raoul André paid not one single visit, either formal or informal, to the château of Les Lilas. This was the more annoying in him that both the Demoiselles Le Courtier and their niece were more than a little interested in the accounts of Raoul André's single-handed heroism, detailed to them at great length, though with a certain vagueness, by the companion of his adventure. They even went to the almost unheard-of length of writing to him with the suggestion that he should call upon them—you may note that the origin of this departure from precedent was clearly attributable to Mademoiselle Hortense's foreign ideas—but still he came not.

Then, upon the eighth day after the death of the grizzly came a surprise—a really crushing surprise—in the form of a large and solidly packed parcel, labelled with the name of Messrs. Gruault, the famous taxidermists of the rue Saint-Antoine and directed to Mademoiselle Desirée Le Courtier herself. When it was opened it proved to contain the skin of a magnificent leopard,

prepared and lined to serve as a hearth-rug with three holes carefully outlined in the head, through which presumably the lethal bullets had passed. Pinned above the largest of them was the visiting-card of M. Raoul André Saint-Bellac-Dupin, bearing the brief inscription, "Forest of the Four Columns," with the date upon which the grizzly bear had fallen before the donor's unerring rifle.

"But—but—I do not understand," said Desirée, gazing at it. "This—surely it was not a leopard that he killed after all."

Mademoiselle Hortense, gazing over her shoulder, was the first to remark a letter, in one of Messrs. Gruault's envelopes, which had fallen to the ground when the parcel was opened. It also was addressed to Mademoiselle Le Courtier and it contained a note to the following effect. Messrs. Gruault presented their compliments and at the same time their humble apologies. They had not been able to enclose the skin of a bear of the dimensions required by Mons. Saint-Bellac-Dupin, having none in stock of anything like the size. As, however, M. Dupin had made an especial point that the skin should be delivered within a week at latest and they had been unable to communicate with him in the meantime, they had ventured to forward the enclosed leopard-skin, of approximately the same value, assuring Mademoiselle Desirée Le Courtier at the same time that, should she wish to exchange it and would return it at their expense, they would devote their best efforts to obtaining her the skin of a grizzly of the required dimensions.

"It—but it is incredible——" cried Desirée, raising her eyes to heaven. "He

would never dare—

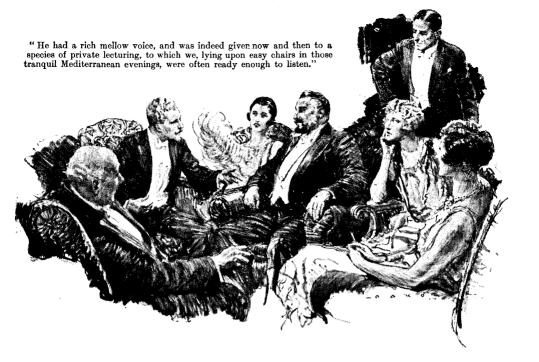
"Here is M. Dupin himself just entering the garden-gate," said Mademoiselle Hortense, happening to glance out of the window. "No doubt he will be able to explain," she added grimly.

The most curious part of the story is that Mademoiselle Desirée Le Courtier is to-day Madame Raoul André Le Courtier-Dupin. Whether because the unfortunate young man's remorse, despair, tears, threats of suicide and sincere penitence aroused that pity which we are told is akin to love; whether she had made up her mind all the time to accept him and allowed nothing to stand in her path; whether—though that one does not like to believe—she saw in his lapse from the narrow path an effective means of keeping him in subjugation in the future; certain at least it is that they were married within three months at the Cathedral of St. Gratien in Biort, and afterwards at the Mairie, and that a happier couple to-day you need not hope to find anywhere in the Département of the Deux-Bièvres. So ardent, so affectionate, so devoted and so obedient a husband has Raoul André shown himself indeed, that Desirée has never yet found it necessary to make the slightest reference, even by implication, to the grizzly bear that was miraculously changed into a leopard, though it is true that the leopard-skin graces the floor of her salon, and that never a day passes but Raoul André has it before him as a silent witness.

Marjolaine? Yes—of course. If by chance you should happen to visit the Cirque des Nouveautés, in the Boulevard Saint-Germain, any time next October, you may be fairly sure of seeing her, with her two sisters, Blanche and Babette, solemnly circling the ring on her bicycle, as solemnly pulling a cork with her own corkscrew, or, most solemnly of all, dying to the strains of the "Marseillaise" in the name of the Republique one and indivisible.

THE BAY.

WE dip bare feet within the pool
Transparent, green, and cool,
And lift warm sand,
Letting it idly slip through a closed hand;
Swim through the bay to some great rock to rest
Sea cooled, sun warmed, wind freshened, wind caressed.
LETITIA WITHALL.



THE EARTHQUAKE

By JAN GORDON

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

HE hotel is not what a reporter would call a caravanserai, though in structure it approaches that old Eastern refuge of the wandering merchant and of the Arab camel-driver. It is an ancient building, four-square, centred about a courtyard garden, with interior arcades, balcony and loggia looking down upon walks of tessellated pavement laid down by artists long dead, domesticated cypress trees grouped about a marble-topped wall, and orange trees from which the guests may pluck their own fruit if they wish.

On the outside the hotel is forbidding rather than beautiful—once it was a palace and, in deference to a certain lack of popularity which the original builders enjoyed, it was conceived as much for defence as for homeliness. The builders took more delight in the contemplation of their own domestic tranquillity than in surveying the rancours, disorders and poverty of the town without: shut in with their own silken

lords, ladies and retainers, they could only too easily persuade themselves that all was right in the best of worlds. So the hotel had few windows looking down upon the old town; and the proprietor, though he had renewed the interior with all the latest modern conveniences, had, wishing to preserve as much as possible of the ancient flavour of the place, refrained from much piercing of the massive walls with obtrusive windows.

I have said that the hotel would not have been called a caravanserai, because, though it was a hotel, at the season of the year when it was really worth while to stay there (from Christmas to April) the casual traveller was hardly welcome. Year in, year out, the same set of people came to the hotel; and, indeed, most of the ladies had first made their acquaintance with the place as children, and many brought their husbands there. It was, during these months of late Italian winter and early

spring, a sort of happy family, and many of the guests called each other by their christian names or, more familiarly, by nicknames. It was, however, an international family. One met here Americans, English, French, Italian, Spanish, all of whom belonged to that middle aristocracy which is merged and married with the upper-plutocracy. general, one had either a reasonable amount of name or of fortune, and the origin of each was well known. During the season it was rare that a bedroom was to let to the stranger, who, if he did appear, had to prove himself either by his ancestry or by his wealth or by his wit, or by his capacity in some of the local sports, golf, boating, fishing, and so on.

This year there was but one stranger at the hotel, a Mr. Van Hoosman, an American, well educated, witty, and as agile as a cinema star. He was a man of medium height, pale complexioned, and with a high forehead from which sprang fair hair with that close wave in it which the French call "chevelure de caniche," or "poodle-wig." His eyes were grey, deep set, and carried a malicious twinkle; he had a small moustache and a thin beard cropped to a point. Though personally unknown to any of the guests at the hotel, he was quickly given the "freedom" of the hotel society—for was he not a cousin of the well-known Van Hoosmans of New York, and did his ancestry not therefore date back to the early Dutch settlers? It came out gradually, from gossip here and there, that his particular branch had migrated, under pressure of circumstances, to San Francisco, where it had become forgotten through increasing poverty: but that he had, by a number of lucky manœuvres at the beginning of the cinema industry, become well supplied with that degraded substance, the lack which, however, renders any amount of aristocratic birth practically negligible. winter clique of the hotel had found Mr. Van Hoosman in possession when it arrived. He had already subjugated the proprietor, Signor Fratici, by his charming manner, and one by one the guests came under his spell: until by the end of February Mr. Van Hoosman was the most popular visitor in the place. He could give Colonel Bradbury-hitherto the golf championthree strokes to nine holes and beat him four days out of five. At billiards he could allow Lance Atkinson a stroke per hundred; and confessed naïvely that, before he had

come to fortune, he had more than once depended upon his skill with the cue for a supper. Such a confession naturally endeared him to the romantically minded of the guests, particularly the feminine ones. Indeed, I myself am being led away by recounting the gifts of Mr. Van Hoosman, for after all he does not play the most important rôle in my story: that is taken up by no less a personage than Nature herself.

But if I remember clearly, it was Mr. Van Hoosman who brought the conversation round one evening to the curious uneasiness of the earth nowadays, with an especial reference to the terrible earthquakes of South America and the reputed disappearance of Easter Island and its mysterious statuary.

"There have foundered the last vestiges of some civilisation, the meaning and origin of which we shall never learn. All we know is that something humanly grandiose must have existed. Now the last traces have been engulfed like those of the fabulous Atlantis. It has disappeared into the dim recesses of the ocean."

He had a rich mellow voice, and was indeed given now and then to a species of private lecturing, to which we, lying upon easy chairs in those tranquil Mediterranean evenings, were often ready enough to listen.

"Indeed, in the observatories they say that the crust of the earth is to-day in a continuous tremble. That vibrations—miniature earthquakes, in fact—are running

through it all the while.

"This reminds me of a story told of the King of Saxony. He was being shown over an observatory, and naturally, amongst other things, he was shown the seismograph, the instrument for recording earthquakes; and he was also shown the wavy line which the needle traces, with a big jag for quite a little shake, so that when anything really important occurs the needle flies right off the paper. Then they showed him the indicator connected with other centres of observation, which instantly warns the observatory of earthquakes elsewhere, so that the time for the earth wave to travel through the earth can be measured.

"'That, Your Royal Highness,' said the chief astronomer, 'is the indicator board. Each of those buttons denotes an earthquake in a different part of the world.'

"" Wonderful! Wonderful!" murmured the King, gazing at the board. "Wonderful thing, indeed, is science. Now, gentlemen,

if I press, say, this button, at which spot shall I let loose an earthquake?""

We laughed at this conclusion, thinking naturally that Mr. Van Hoosman had worked up the earthquake idea in order to let off his story. Archie Henner said

lazily:

"Queer things, earthquakes. Brother of mine in Japan, you know. There you have earthquakes in to tea, as it were, nice domestic little earthquakes. Make your pictures all go crooked and take the furniture for exercise. He told me once that he and his wife were one each side of a cherry tree, picking cherries for a tart. Suddenly his wife cried out.

"' What's the matter?' asks Bumpo—call

him Bumpo, you know.

"'Can't you feel the earthquake?' calls she. Fact, you know. Earthquake one side of the tree, not a shiver on the other. Earth like a horse, over there, twitching its skin."

"But, really," said Mr. Van Hoosman, putting a note of more earnestness in his voice, "these things are beginning to worry meteorologists a little. They say that the earth is either expanding or contracting: either it's bursting its seams, or it's getting cooler and smaller and shivering a bit. Anyway, it is taking a new phase. You must realise that those astronomer fellows know a dickens of a lot about this earth. Take its shape, for instance. Didn't they teach you at school that all peninsulas point southwards? And if you think it over you will find that most of the continents come to an apex going south, and most of the seas to a point going north. They have found out why. If I don't bore you, I'll go on.

"Do," murmured somebody politely.

"This earth isn't really round, or at least it doesn't want to be round. It hasn't made up its mind quite: but it wavers between a sphere which has most inside to the least skin, and a pyramid shape called a tetrahedron which has the most skin to the least inside. Now the whizzing makes it desire to be a sphere, but the shrinking makes it need to be a pyramid; so when it shrinks it shrinks somewhat pyramidically, and hence these big triangular shapes which you get, like America and Africa.

"Of course, when it decides to alter its coat, there's a deuce of a racket. The last time it did so seriously, it threw up the Alps and these Apennines and the Pyrenees. Well, of course, any men who happened to

be about at such a moment would be seriously inconvenienced."

"Rotten things, earthquakes," said Le Farrey. He was French, but prided himself on his use of the English idiom. "You can't wangle compensation for them even in depreciated francs."

"I wonder we don't cut Nature," said Lance Atkinson. "If anybody was so beastly inconsiderate to me, I wouldn't tip

my cap to him."

"Well, we are doing our best," said Van Hoosman, "but it's a bit like trying to cut your schoolmaster. One is apt to get a

drubbing for it."

"Ugh," said the Contessa Beretti, with a shudder of her comely American shoulders. "I should just hate to be in an earthquake. It must be simply horrible. I had a cousin who was in San Francisco. I can't tell you the things she told me. And now this Etna is beginning, and it isn't so far away after all."

"By the way, Van Hoosman," said Le Farrey, "you hail from San Francisco. Were you by any chance knocking about there at that time?"

"Aye," said Van Hoosman, and sat for a moment with his eyes, serious and drawn, looking into the past. We were silent, not daring to ask for such reminiscences.

"It began with a queer rumbling," he said suddenly, "just a queer rumbling, and a sort of gentle shudder which ran through the house which I was in. I tell you I thought that a heavy lorry was passing; you can feel a similar thing in London sometimes if you live over a tube. Then the house began to sway. That is the nastiest sensation I have ever had. You get a sort of sudden sea-sickness, an earthquake sickness. You expect such a thing on sea, but to get it on land is so terrorising that it makes you go wild. Your bones go to water, you lose your head. You don't know what you are doing, literally. After things are over you wake up, as it were, and everything has been like a bad dream. I know that when all was over I found that I had come out in my top-hat with an overcoat over my pyjamas, that I had carefully saved my shaving apparatus, and that I was carrying the porter's canary bird in a cage—where I had picked that up, I can't remember. I have images in the mind like phantoms of a dream, lit with sudden pictures, often ridiculous.

"We are only tragi-comedians after all, as Meredith calls us. Even out of that

horror the only things I remember clearly are the comic ones.... instance, two women in their nightdresses, who had stopped in the middle of the road to quarrel over a dressinggown that somebody had dropped. And as they were arguing, a naked woman comes racing down the street, whips it from their hands, and runs off, getting into it as she goes. another: a fat man with nothing on but a pair of trousers and gay carpet slippers, trotting along strangulated with sobs, but holding up over his head an umbrella as a protection from the falling houses. That is the kind of nonsense the human brain records out of a tragedy. Ask a soldier his reminiscences of battle, and ten to one he will tell you something ludicrous.

"But, believe me, there is nothing ludicrous in that sickening

feeling which comes when the house begins to act like a ferry-boat. If any of you by

any chance encounter that warning rumble, get out of doors as quick as you can is my advice. If the sickness catches you indoors, it's ten to one you will never see out of doors at all."

" Oh, don't be horrid, Mr. Van Hoosman," cried little Mrs. Fletcher. She was not the

most beautiful of our younger married women, but she exercised a peculiar charm, and kept a court which could rival that of Señorita Pasteca, the acknowledged beauty of the hotel. Mrs. Fletcher had vivacity, while the Spanish girl was rather stupid for all her loveliness.

"I don't want to frighten anybody," cried Mr. Van Hoosman seriously; "but if these astronomers are right, it is as well that one should not be caught quite unwarned, as I was."

"In time you get used to earthquakes, anyway," said Archie Henner. "Bumpo says that they are awfully useful for moving





the San Fran-

cisco earth-

quake had

some right to

be jumpy on the subject.

I remember

reflecting,

the nerves of our women. Some are only too ready to imagine any evil, and to make it extra frightening to themselves because they have imagined it. I knew one who at the time of the first aeroplanes was scared at the idea of being knocked out by a nut or a screw dropping down from one: and during the London air raids she would walk calmly in the streets while the shrapnel was falling.

Hotel dinner was set at about half-past seven, and we would go up to dress at about seven o'clock: the women who wanted to

I was just about to wash—was in my trousers and vest-when I noticed that the water in the hand-basin was quivering in little ripples, and then, faintly, I began to hear a sullen rumble. I stared and harkened: there was no doubting the shiver and

"By Jove!" I ejaculated. "Here's an

which I had taken off, for I thought that I'd better go out rather more dressed than I was at the moment. Then out broke the most infernal din that I have ever had understood. women And then, while I was still standing like a dummy, aghast at the horrible clamour -" pigs being killed," Jack London has

called it—there came a banging at my door, and Van Hoosman pushed in

his head.

" It's coming!" he ejaculated. "My advice. Get out quick." And he ran on, thumping upon one door after another, spreading the alarm, with a truly heroic selfsacrifice.

"My word!" thought I. "He has been there. He ought to know."

So without waiting longer for my shirt, I clutched a coat. It was, of course, dark outside in the garden; and as I came out of my room, which was on the loggia, I came into a crowd of people all pressing towards the staircase. Some of the men were cursing, and a full half of the women were shricking at the tops of their voices. I never shall want to hear that noise again. A girl seized me.

Help me out, I am going to faint," she muttered. So I put my arm about her and,

however, that he was playing a little on

half supporting, half dragging, got her to the top of the staircase. My concentration on the job took off some of the real scare I had got: a scare, I suppose, half induced by the panic in which I was merged. If the panic at Pompeii was anything like this one, I feel that the soldier who was found smothered upright at his post was one of the pluckiest of imaginable men. All I know personally is, that we went solidly. Yet I will admit something. There was good breeding amongst us. Though we were in a panic, there was not an excessive amount of pushing, except when a great piece of roof seemed to fall into the courtyard. the while the quivering and rumbling had been getting more violent. But nobody looked like wanting to die at his post. Colonels and captains and ordinary men and women, we went helter-skelter down that staircase, towards the street.

"Make for the open market-place, make for the open," yelled Van Hoosman in a tremendous voice, which could be heard above the din. At that moment another piece of roof crashed into the garden, hurrying even more our footsteps, which before that had not been lagging.

We must have burst out of the noble porch into the Mediterranean night like a froth of torrent water over a weir. In a solid stream we poured down the narrow street to the little market-place, which was about three minutes' normal walk distant. As we went, windows were hurriedly flung open, voices called out, people were running out of their homes in amazement and terror.

We halted in a large group at the centre of the market-place; while the inhabitants, gesticulating and crying out in their patois, came thicker and yet thicker about us.

As we huddled together; as the shrieks of the women were stilled into sobbing and the wild whoops of hysteria; as we collected our scattered perceptions—we became aware that the effect of the earthquake had not yet reached the market-place. The church tower, which we expected to see tilting over at any moment, remained upright. Not even tiles were falling. And, as far as we could feel, there was not even a quiver of the earth or a rumble. The girl whose life I had saved seemed to come to her senses. and, realising that she was reclining, a very scantily dressed body, in my arms, shook herself free. With a gasp of horrified thanks, she pushed her way into the crowd to look for some member of her own family.

We were a scantily dressed gathering. The earthquake could not have caught us at a more inopportune moment, except, perhaps, had it occurred at midnight. Though the general aim of social culture has been to impress upon young ladies and gentlemen that it were better to die of slow torture than to appear in public in underclothes, and though no doubt many, had they had time to reflect, would have been faithful to their education; yet having been caught unawares, so to say, they had undoubtedly betrayed almost every precept which Mrs. Grundy could formulate. I will not attempt to go further into the physical revelations of that scene, except by mentioning that little Mrs. Fletcher, for instance, had been surprised in nothing less than her bath, and had snatched up a bedspread as she was running in terror from the room. But, as Van Hoosman had suggested, the surface of tragedy bristles with the ludicrous. One or two ladies, Mrs. Colonel Bradbury amongst them, had appeared with wild, grey and scanty locks in the place of their proper luxuriant coiffures. Le Farrey, who usually sported a strange mop of hair normal only to genius, was at the moment hardly recognisable with a pate which glistened in the moonlight. But perhaps the greatest surprise of all was to find that the lovely Señorita Pasteca, when she had opened her mouth to scream, hadn't a tooth in her head. That brilliant and perfect smile was dentist's art.

So we stood there part stunned; part wondering when the next shock would surprise us; and part taking sly stock of one another. Archie Henner said:

"This must be like Japan. Shock there, no shock here. I'll know now what Bumpo goes through. Plucky little woman his wife—what?"

"Where's Van Hoosman?" asked someone. "He knows all about such things."

"Where's Van Hoosman? Where's Van Hoosman?" we repeated with rising voices.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Mrs. Fletcher, clutching her bedspread. "He has been killed."

"Last thing I saw of him, he was running about giving warnings," said one.

"If it hadn't been for him we shouldn't have got out," said another.

"Saved our lives, even when the roof was coming off—and maybe lost his own, poor devil," said a third. There was a silence.

"Look here!" ejaculated a Captain Baker.
"I'm going back to find out. Who will

come with me?"

"Oh, Harry!" cried his wife. "Do be careful. You never know when another shock is coming. And the streets are dreadfully narrow."

"All the same, we've got to see what we

can do."

"I'll come," said I, and another unmarried man volunteered with me.

Though I had got over the panic, it was a devilish queer sensation going back through those dim streets, aware that one little shudder of old mother earth would level those old houses flat like a collapsing house of childish card-building. Somehow, too, I felt that I should have been braver if I had been more fully dressed. The fact that I was only in my vest and my trousersfor I had given my coat to Miss Bridges, who needed it far more than did I—seemed to take from me a sense of security. I suddenly realised the psychology of Van Hoosman's fat man who had put up his umbrella during the San Francisco earthquake. I then realised that the panic had had the more effect upon us at the time because most of us were half undressed. Modern clothing may seem to be poor sort of armour, but it is a kind of armour to the soul at least. Also the fact that I had run all the way in my socks, and that my feet in consequence were tender from contact with the stones, had a most unexhilarating effect upon my courage. It deprived me of a certain imaginative power of being able to dodge falling chimneys or bricks. Until that moment, I had never understood upon what small accidentals fortitude may depend.

We proceeded, astonished to encounter no ruins, and came at last to the Plazzo. We were amazed to find that the hotel was still standing. In the wide porch the electric light was burning undisturbed.

"Confound it," said Captain Baker, "it

couldn't have been a false alarm."

"Not a bit of it," I responded. "Why, I felt the shake distinctly, and the roof began to slide off."

"I felt the house heave at that moment,"

"I felt the house I said the other man.

"So did I," I answered.

"Rum!" ejaculated Baker. "Still, these outer walls are pretty thick. It must be ruined inside. We'd better go carefully."

We crossed the drive which had been made over the ancient moat, and going with

caution passed into the dignified entrance with its groined roof.

"Humph!" said Baker, and led the way through a small postern door into the

central garden.

We stood dumbfounded. The hotel seemed quite undamaged, and the loggia and balcony running all around, with all the bedroom doors flung open, were a blaze of light. Upon the pathway a few smashed tiles marked all the damage that the earthquake had achieved.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Baker. "Still, if another shock comes: there's a piece off

the roof, at all events."

"But what can have happened to Van Hoosman?" asked the other man.

"Well, he's not dead, that's certain, unless he got a tile on his head," replied Baker.

"I suppose we had better wait a bit to see that a second shock doesn't come," I said; "these things come in waves, I believe. But I suggest that we hurry upstairs and collect a few armfuls of bedspreads for the women. I want a pair of slippers, too; my feet are torn to ribbons."

"Good idea," agreed Baker. In a few minutes we were making our way back to the market-place, loaded with coverings.

By this time the town was in a tumult. As we went, we were besieged on all sides by vociferous questions; but as all the inhabitants were shouting at once, we couldn't make head or tail of what they were saying.

Suddenly Baker burst into a giggle. "By Jove!" he ejaculated, "we ought to have collected the old ladies' wigs en

passant."

Our coverings were received with a shamefaced gratitude. We gave our queer news. Then a Frenchman, Count Duchesne, said:

"I have been talking to one of the townsmen. He says that no earthquake has taken

"But perhaps he didn't feel it," retorted Charlie Henner. "What about Bumpo's cherry-tree."

"Anyway, there was enough to bring some of the roof off," replied Baker; "the

courtvard is littered with tiles."

"I-I-I'm v-v-v-ery c-o-o-old-d," chattered little Mrs. Fletcher; "ca-an't we g-go b-back, Harry? I'd r-really s-sooner d-die t-than-n g-go on l-like t-this."

"Let's all return and get into some clothes, at all events," said Colonel Bradbury, sensibly; "we can get out again if a second

shock comes."

So in a troupe, now shivering with the cold, we made our way back to the hotel. We were going to our rooms, when we were astonished by a shout of perplexed fury from Colonel Bradbury.

"Confound it all, sir!" he cried.

has my door become locked?"

"Perhaps it's jammed by the earthquake,"

said somebody.

"Jammed—no such thing," roared the Colonel. "I can shake it. It's locked, confound it. Who the devil locked it?"

The ladies were more interested in finding their clothes: but we men gathered in a

group at the Colonel's door.

"Ît's undoubtedly locked," said Charlie Henner, giving the door a shake. He bent down and put his eye to the keyhole. "I say," he cried, straightening himself. "There's somebody inside. Listen, you fellows."

We were silent, and heard distinctly a movement and a groan.

"Perhaps Van Hoosman got hurt," said

"Yes, but who locked the door?" growled the Colonel.

"Here goes," cried Charlie. "Excuse me, Colonel." And with a strong thrust of his shoulder he burst open the door.

In the centre of the room, gagged and tied fast to the bedpost, was Signor Fratici, the

owner of the hotel.

"Mon Dieu!" cried Le Farrey, who had recovered his aplomb with his wig. "Who de dickens did dat?" In his excitement, however, he forgot the careful use of his

Signor Fratici wriggled with impotent gestures. Quickly we loosed his bonds. We then untied the handkerchief from his face and drew out of his mouth a mass of damp pink chiffon which had been one of Mrs. Bradbury's undervests.

"Ugh!" said Signor Fratici, stamping and spitting and rubbing his chafed wrists.

"Ugh! Ah! Ugh!"

Then suddenly his expression changed from disgust to tragedy. His hands sprang to his hair.

" Ah! Signors," he cried, "I am ruined. Maria! What a tragedy! Oh, the villain!" And the tears poured down his face.

"Calm yourself," we said, "calm yourself, Signor. Who tied you up? What has

happened?"

"Wata 'as 'appen?" cried the Signor. "Wata 'as 'appen? Sinka me." Signor Fratici, in spite of the normal excellence of his manners, had learned most of his English in Italian New York.

"Wata for you all scoot avay lik'a lot'a

rabbit? Wata for, I say?"

"Well, Signor," said Charlie Henner, rather shamefacedly. "There was the beginning of an earthquake, you know."

"Eartha-quake?" cried Signor Fratici.

"Yes, we got the first warning, the shock . . ."

"And the house heaved . . ."

"And the roof began to come off . . ."

"You heard that . . ."

Our chorus of assertions was interrupted by a loud shriek—a feminine shriek.

"Harry! Harry!"

"My wife!" ejaculated Fletcher, spinning

"Harry," cried Mrs. Fletcher, running down the balcony, still but partially clothed. "Harry, what have you done with my jewels?"

"Your jewels ?-" shouted Fletcher.

"Oh, they're gone, then," cried the little woman, throwing up her arms dramatically. "Dat's wat'a I say," shrieked Signor

Fratici.

Mrs. Fletcher was but the leader of a new chorus of falsetto dismay—a chorus only less agonising than those screams of terror which had accompanied the earthquake.

"My diamonds!"

"My pearl necklace!"

"My opals!"

"My jewel-case!"

Every bedroom had been stripped of valuables. As the earthquake had surprised the hotel on the edge of nudity, the guests had all been so occupied with finding even a minimum of clothing or of saving their womenfolk before fleeing for their lives, that almost everything of value had been left behind, and everything was gone.

"But where is that fellow, Van Hoosman?"

suddenly roared Colonel Bradbury. "Dat's it, dat's it," shrieked Signor Fratici, waving his arms. "Vere is dat Van 'Oosman? Ladie' and gentlemana, listen

to me. I am ruin. You 'ear my explanation. You forgif' me."

We held an attentive silence.

"I 'ear de racket, an' I come in from de back streeta, vere I was looking at de machina. I come in an' I see you'all run out'a like tings go mad. I 'ear de tile fæll from de roof'a, and I wonder if de 'ouse'a fall down. But I wait one moment. You all run down'a de street. An' I wait, an' de 'ouse not fall'a down. So I say, Wat'a all dis? I go upta de firs' storey to see if I fin' what'a start de scoot. An' I meet dat Van 'Oosman coming from'a de bedroom, number sixteen."

"Van 'Oosman, me wroom!" ejaculated

Mme. Finner.

"Exacly, madame. An' I say to 'eem, 'What'a de racket, an' wat'a you do een madam'a room, Mistaire 'Oosman?' An' 'e say, 'Come'a in 'ere,' an' 'e drag me inta de Colonel room. Den 'e pull out a revolver an' say: 'I shoota you dead, if you jabber,' an' 'e tie me up lik'a you fin', wit' de Colonel dressing-gown string, an' 'e stuff data pink ting in my mout'. Den 'e pinch de Colonel lady jewels an' 'e 'op. An' I lef' 'ere to tink 'ow I ruined, an' to tink and tink why de 'ell all you folk run outa de 'ouse, dat'a way."

"But, man, there was an earthquake,"

said Lance Atkinson.

- "Earthquake, how?" queried Signor Fratici.
- "Why, we all felt it. The rumble and the shaking, it was as clear as anything. And we all felt the house heave."

"Of course we did."

- "Nature couldn't have been in league with Van Hoosman, however clever he was."
- "De 'ouse'a 'eave, I did not feel," said Signor Fratici. "De tila fall down; yes. 'Ow, I do not know, but I soon fin' out. But 'ow de rumble an' de shake come, I do know."

"You know?"

"Dat is why I go out behind. It is a heavy lorry which pass, wit a ting behind. How you call it, eh?"

" A trailer ?"

"Dat's it. A snailer. A lorry wit' a snailer an' dey make soch a bompetty-bomp, I say, 'Wat'a dat?' So I go to look. Never will I heer so bompetty-bomp a machina till I dead."

"It was a fake?" cried Le Farrey.

The servants had, of course, caught the contagious panic and had, without knowing why, run down the street with us. They had also come back like sheep, and now one of them came upstairs with a foolish grin, and said that there was a man at the door enquiring for Mr. Van Hoosman.

"Bring him up here," growled Colonel

Bradbury.

The man was an Italian mechanic, dressed in the regulation blue overalls. He carried his cap in his hand, and made us a foreign bow.

- "What do you want," asked the Colonel sternly, in Italian.
- "I wish to know what to do with the machine," said the man.

"The machine."

"Yes, the lorry."

"Haw, haw!" cried Charlie Henner. "Here's the earthquake, gentlemen. I suggest that we go and examine our earthquake. We have paid for it, at all events."

We trooped down.

excellent forgery.

In a side street we found a heavy lorry with a trailer. They were both filled with stones, and round the wheels lengths of stout chain had been wound in order to increase the vibration. The driver volubly explained that he had been told to drive round the building, then to go to and fro once or twice behind the hotel, and then to proceed into a side street to await Mr. Van Hoosman. It was for a practical joke, the American had said.

So there was our earthquake. Naturally, Van Hoosman was never seen again. He had run down to the port, had borrowed Captain Baker's motor-boat, and had set off down the coast. After proceeding for some four miles, he had put into a little fishing port, where we were all well known; had left the boat there, and from thence on . . . not a trace. He had left his passport in the hotel, and it proved to be a most

The fall of the tiles had been managed by an accomplice, a valet de chambre, who had served at the hotel for two seasons, and who probably had originated a plot to rob the hotel: though undoubtedly the master spirit had been Van Hoosman. The accomplice had been on the roof; and in the night, even a few tiles clattering down have a startling effect upon nerves already strained. But a curious feature of the thing was the number of folks who swore that they had felt the hotel rocking on its foundations. Indeed, I had felt it myself. This I never could fathom until I came recently upon a book named *The Value of Evidence*, by a

smart fellow called Munsterberg.

But the poor old Signor Fratici was right about his ruin. Although we could not visit our losses upon him, the season was spoiled, and one by one the guests began to slink away. The first departure was that of Señorita Pasteca with her family. She said that her nerves were injured by the fright. I suspect that the consciousness of our knowledge that her smile was false was the stronger factor. Also the ladies with

chignons went away very soon. But we all felt strangely one to another. It is a queer thing that you can bathe together in almost any sort of undress without blushing; but if you meet in your underclothes, you can't get over it. Such is the force of fashion. But beside that, we had all been scared as well as hocussed together, which somehow didn't bring us together any the closer. One by one the guests went away, to the grief of Signor Fratici. I strongly suspect that few of them will come back next year.

There has been but one happy event resulting from the affair. This is the marriage of Miss Bridges to Count Duchesne. It is said that he first fell in love with her upon the night of the earthquake!



GOLD.

DURE gold, bright gold, I often laugh to think How rich I am, how idle I have been-While others toil and break their hearts and die, I laugh and bring a million nuggets in; I store them in a gleaming golden bowl Within the ancient stronghold of my soul.

I sift it through my fingers-my bright gold-And I can name my nuggets one by one: This is the morning light upon the hill, And this a gold, gold flower of the sun, And this, a wild canary that flew high Against a lovely pale-gold evening sky.

Orange and bronze where autumn fruits are swung, And molten gold where yellow maples stand, Oh, I have gathered them within my soul Where I can touch them with my naked hand; To-morrow, in another idle hour, I'll mine more gold from hill and field and flower. GRACE NOLL CROWELL.



"All about him hovered a cloud of flying insects, settling on his eyes, his ears, his lips, crawling on his neck, his back, and stinging him with all the fierceness of their angry natures."

LORDS OF THE PALACE

By LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON CASSERLY

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

In the centuries the forest had closed in on it, the rose-gardens in which lovely women of Persia and Kashmir once walked had become a tangled wilderness, the spreading roots of parasitic trees had forced the stones apart and brought down portions of the walls in ruins. Yet still the broken shell of *Moti Mahal*, the Pearl Palace, remained to show—could human eyes see it—how exquisite a gem it had been when a Viceroy of the conquering Moslems had built it in the days of the rule of the Mogul Em-

perors over Hindustan. Into cool and lofty chambers paved with marble the light stole faintly through the thick greenery, darkening the carved windows filled with lace-like perforated screens of alabaster through which hidden beauties had peeped down on the gilded palanquins of nobles and their gallant retinues of steel-clad warriors on elephants and horses, who had journeyed far to present their homage to the Lord of the Palace.

Long years had passed since the empire

of the Moguls had vanished; Viceroy, ladies and Mussulman nobles had departed; and the conquering jungle now walled in the deserted ruin with an impenetrable maze of dense undergrowth that shut it off completely from the outer world. Long ago the road that led to it through the woodland had disappeared, smothered in vegetation; and the primeval Indian forest stretched unbroken for scores of miles on every side. Under the giant sal and simal trees herds of wild elephants, children of those that had given sport to the Viceroy's hunting-parties, wandered unmolested, protected now by the orders of a greater Emperor than the Mogul monarchs; while from the orchid-covered boughs little monkeys chattered down at them in foolish rage, annoyed because the great beasts disdained to notice them.

In the densest shadow of the gloomy undergrowth the heavy-bodied sambhur stags lurked in fear of their lives, in spite of their sharp antlers; while their unarmed hinds and fawns wandered openly with greater courage. Small birds twittered in the bushes; and the jungle fowl busily pecked the swarming ants or, at any alarm, whirred up into the highest branches of the trees.

But nothing stirred inside the impenetrable hedge fencing in the Moti Mahal like that which had grown up around the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty. For no beast could break a way through it to disturb the peace of the ruined building, and its shadowy chambers were strangely silent.

The largest of them, the Durbar Chamber, which was the Throne Room and Hall of Audience in which the Viceroy had sat in state, was a lofty and spacious apartment faintly lit by narrow windows choked with the webs of generations of big spiders and set high in the walls on which a few blurred traces of paint were all that was left of the ornamentation on which the greatest artists of the Court of Delhi had laboured long. It was paved with great slabs of marble, some displaced by the thrusting roots of jungle plants grown from seeds that, blown in by chance, had dropped between them and now boldly pushed them aside. Here and there were heaps of dust, crumbling plaster, decaying leaves, rotting vegetation, the accumulation of centuries that poisoned the stagnant air.

In this great room the Lord of the Palace had held his more than royal state, had given audience, rewarded, punished, raised some to high rank, degraded others, bestowed the boon of life on some, condemned their fellows to death, to an awful doom under the pounding feet of his elephants out yonder in the courtyard now overgrown and hidden by the smothering jungle. Here he had feasted; but he and his guests had long ago mouldered into dust.

Yet in the vast, empty chamber high revel was being held again. For, swarming out of holes in the walls or between the dislodged slabs of the flooring, came scores of bandicoot rats, large as half-grown kittens, quarrelling, courting, nibbling, chasing one another, sitting up kangaroo fashion to clean their whiskers with busy paws. And their squeaking drowned the drowsy hum of the insects hovering or circling in the still air and the shrill cries of the geckos, the parasite wall-lizards which disputed the flies and moths with the spiders.

But, just as in the old days the chatter of the courtiers was suddenly hushed when their lord appeared, so as swiftly silence fell on these four-footed successors when a strange rustling sound struck through their noise and told them that their Master of the Palace had come among them.

Across the floor a grey snake slid with sinuous motion, its underneath scales stretching apart to grip with their edges the cracks of the broken marble pavement and pull the shining coils forward with surprising speed. It was about six feet long, having a slender body and a small, pointed head with lidless, unwinking eyes and a slit mouth from which its forked tongue shot out, quivering with the ceaseless motion of an aspen leaf and seeming to feel the way and the position of each one of the prey around simultaneously.

The rats were apparently paralysed with fright and incapable of movement as the serpent glided swiftly among them and, lifting its head and a third of its length, balanced them on the remaining coils and the thin tail. The loose skin around its neck swelled out like a flattened balloon, showing on the back of it a curious marking resembling a pair of spectacles that proclaimed the snake to be a cobra, one of the deadliest of the many deadly reptiles of India.

Erect, with quivering tongue and head drawn in, it swayed backward and forward from side to side, balancing in graceful but terrible movements, dancing the Dance of Doom; and the fascinated rats gazed powerlessly while it chose its victim among them. Before it a fat, well-fed youngster was sitting up on its hindquarters, staring stupidly

at the curved fangs now showing in the open mouth of the Death Dealer.

The lot fell to him. Like lightning the cobra's head struck forward and down, its grooved eye-teeth pierced the hairy skin and, being loose in their sockets, were driven by the force of the blow back on the poison bags at their bases, from which a drop of deadly venom was expelled along the groove running down each fang to the sharp point, and thus entered the wound. And almost simultaneously the snake threw a coil around its victim and held it fast.

The striking of the blow broke the fatal charm that held the other bandicoots motionless, and they scattered and fled in panic into their holes, leaving the cobra and its prey alone in the great chamber. The stricken quarry screamed shrilly and struggled feebly; but the swift poison paralysed it, and the enveloping coils tightened and crushed the little body until the bones cracked and the victim died.

Then the cobra released it. Above the fat corpse the head hovered for a few moments, seeming to gloat over the promised feast, then it went down and the forked tongue licked the dead bandicoot all over, covering it with a greasy slime to make it slip down more easily. The snake opened its mouth and began to swallow the rat's skull.

It seemed impossible that the fat body could follow it down the gullet of the cobra, for its diameter was much greater than the reptile's. But Nature has adapted snakes to overcome such difficulty; and the cobra's lower jawbone was divided in front and held together by an elastic ligament. So when the right half sank its teeth into the rat, the left half pushed forward and got a grip farther back. Then the right let go and thrust out again, securing a hold farther on; and in turn up came the left again. alternately gripping, they pulled the head into the mouth, as a sailor hauls in a rope hand over hand. The upper jawbone and the palate were also movable and helped in the process; and slowly the bandicoot's head went down the cobra's throat.

Then came the big body; and to admit it the jaws, attached at their bases to the skull by a ball-and-socket joint united by expanding muscular bands, opened wide and allowed the mouth to be enormously distended. So the carcase slipped down the gullet on its way to the cobra's stomach. Snakes have no breast-bone, and the ribs can thus be widely extended to let a prey much greater

than their usual circumference pass down them, and, working freely, they help it on its journey. And so by a complicated mechanism of Nature's design the bandicoot reached its final resting-place; and the satisfied cobra, with an enormous swelling in its middle now, slid sluggishly over the floor to the deep, narrow hole which was its usual hiding-place, there to lie stupefied until, spewing up the bones and skin that could not be digested, it would come forth again, slim and hungry, in search of more food.

Hardly had it vanished when out from concealment came the bandicoots once more. the tragedy forgotten in the relief of knowing that for days they were safe from another such visitation. They began their lighthearted gambols again, for they never learned wisdom; yet this snake-Nag Samp, the Cobra Serpent, was his Hindustani namehad preyed on generations of them. For he was very old. Not even the greyest ancient of the rats could tell for how many years he had lorded it over the deserted palace. His rule was undisputed; none of his sons, grandsons or their sons dared to contest it. He brooked no rival; and more than one of his descendants had preceded the fat bandicoot into the cannibal old serpent's maw. He feared nothing in his little world inside the secluding fence around the ruin; and that dense rampart kept out all the foes that could harm him.

All except one. In the days of his youth when the wandering spirit moved him he used often to slip out through the tangled barrier of thorny bushes into the forest, hunting farther afield. But there disaster nearly overtook him one day.

Coiled about a high branch a great serpent, sixteen feet long, was watching the ground below for prey such as he. It was a hamadryad, a King Cobra, monarch of all the snakes of Asia, armed with a deadlier venom than even Nag Samp's-for its bite would kill a man in fifteen minutes—speedier than a pony and belonging to a race of reptiles gifted with an aggressive spirit that makes them attack human beings and animals unprovoked. So men and beasts dread them with good reason; but not as much as all other snakes do, for on them the hamadryads feed for preference. They are forest dwellers and, unlike most of the serpent brood, have keen vision or some sense that replaces it; for they climb trees and lie among branches to watch for prey.

Now this one marked the venturesome Nag Samp and, uncoiling its length, began to slide down from its perch. Some instinct warned the young snake and, writhing his fastest over the ground, he raced for home and safety. But quickly as he went the King Cobra moved quicker, and only the nearness of the barrier saved Nag Samp. For into the densest part of it, where the tangled stems of the thorny bushes were so closely knitted as to be nearly as solid as a wall, he shot headlong and slipped through where the larger girth of the pursuer found it hard to follow.

The hamadryad got through eventually, not without damage to its glossy, olive-green, white-banded skin; but by then Nag Samp was deep in a hole so narrow that his enemy could not follow him. It contented itself with picking up an unwary daman, or rat-snake seven feet long, caught busily engaged in swallowing a bandicoot, and another cobra that had foolishly taken up its abode in a wide crevice out of which the King plucked it with ease.

There was an interregnum in the ruler-ship of the Palace while the intruder stayed; for Nag Samp abdicated and the gorged hamadryad was undisputed lord. But when its meal was digested it went on its way, and the grey cobra metaphorically ascended the vacant throne once more. But never from that day did he venture to roam beyond the walls again, after that sample of the dangers of the outside world.

The brooding heat of the summer was on the jungle now, and the dead leaves fluttered down in showers from the trees large and small, so that the grateful shade of the forest vanished and the burning sunshine reached the ground plants and the undergrowth, withering all to tinder. Only in the darkened chambers of the ruined palace was there welcome coolness by day for its inhabitants—the sleeping bats, the bandicoots, the scorpions, spiders, snakes and all the rest that lodged between or in the walls.

Yet even there a heated wind began to penetrate; and it brought with it an acrid, suffocating smell and strange sounds ever coming nearer—a soughing that rose at times to a roar and sank again to a sigh, a steady crackling, then sharp reports which swelled into the continuous rattle of a musketry battle, as if all King George's riflemen and machine gunners were fighting through the forest.

For the jungle was burning. The dry grass, the withered bracken, the dense undergrowth, went up in flames that licked the great tree-boles and ran along their branches,

setting the oily orchids with their glossy leaves and trails of mauve and white flowers ablaze. Fire roared up through the hollow trunks of dead giants still standing among their living fellows, bound to them by the thick creepers. The dense clumps of bamboo were sheets of flame, and the air-filled segments of their tall stems exploded with the deafening noise that mimicked musketry.

Nearer and nearer to the Palace drew the conflagration; and in through the breached wall and the empty windows came the pungent smell of burning, the stifling smoke, the sparks and flying fragments of withered leaves ablaze. Wild birds flew in for safety; and a troop of small monkeys, madly racing the flames through the tree-tops, leapt from branch to branch that stretched across the encircling hedge and sprang in to seek sanctuary in the chambers, where they huddled together in fright, yet with instinct telling them that this solid creation of men would not burn. And thus was the privacy of the Palace invaded.

And there was worse harm to come to it. For the great barrier of undergrowth that had so long preserved its seclusion went up in flames, which reached the parasite trees growing from the thick roots that had forced themselves between the great blocks of stone of which the walls were built.

There was one such which, dead and dry now, grew out from the exterior side of the Durbar Hall. The blaze caught it, and it burned fiercely, bough and stem and root, until the masonry that held it erashed down to the earth, leaving a wide gap like a gateway into the great chamber. And out through it the terrified birds and monkeys swept in panic to perish in the flames of the burning jungle.

The fire roared past and away. The smoke-stained ruins were left standing out in a blackened clearing for all eyes to see. The guarding maze of undergrowth had completely disappeared, and an open space lay between them and the scorched tree-trunks that stood like pillars around. The forest seemed dead.

But Nature never wholly kills. With crashing thunder and ceaseless play of dazzling lightning the Rains followed the Hot Weather; and green things pushed up quickly through the sooty soil enriched by the ashes. In search of them the animals that had fled the fires came back. The bisons, the elephants, the deer, the antelopes and the wild pigs returned, and on their heels followed the killers—the tigers, the panthers, the



"Then out from behind a pile of fallen blocks of stone flashed a great black-and-yellow body—and a tiger sprang on the deer."

packs of red dogs and the jackals; and the forest lived again.

But the privacy of the ruins was not restored. Months, years, must pass before the encircling undergrowth could reach its former height and density; and now any four-footed prowler could wander at will through the chambers of the Palace that Nag Samp had looked upon as his own.

This was forcibly brought home to the tyrannical old snake, when one day, as he slid over the marble pavement of the Durbar Hall, he was nearly trampled to death under the sharp hoofs of a big sambhur stag that came bounding madly in through the gap in the wall, fleeing from the pursuit of a victorious rival.

Rain was streaming from its black coat, for the monsoon was deluging the forest. The deer was a big animal, fourteen hands high at the shoulder; but instead of the thick, two-tined antlers that it usually carried, its forehead bore only the bleeding bases from which they had once sprung. For like all deer, the sambhur had just shed its horns and would have to go through the annual painful and lengthy process of growing them all over again. The loss of these natural weapons had left it defenceless and it had been forced to flee from a jealous rival in love. Chance had led it to take refuge in this strange place, which had long ago lost the man-smell to which wild animals are averse, and held nothing to frighten. The dryness of the shelter made it welcome after the wet lair on the sodden ground out yonder in the dripping jungle; and the sambhur decided to remain.

It was used to the presence of such minor beasts as rats and snakes, and did not object even to the latter; for, with the exception of hamadryads, these reptiles are not aggressive and do not attack if not interfered with.

Even now Nag Samp, disgusted as he was at the stag's coming, made no hostile move; although one prick of his envenomed tooth would have killed the intruder. He had good reason to be angry; for the great clumsy brute might unwittingly trample on him, and the least touch of the sharp-edged hoofs would break his delicate spine and leave him to die miserably, a prey to the terrible jaws of hungry ants while life still lingered in him. But with the retiring disposition of the reptile race he preferred to abdicate and remained hidden in his hole, letting the sovereignty pass to his unconscious supplanter, which used to lie up in the Palace when not grazing in the forest.

The seclusion suited the stag, for, while the new horns were sprouting—they were soon a few inches long but, until fully developed, would be of a soft, spongy material covered with the skin that is called "velvet"—its instinct taught it to hide away; for the lack of its weapon left it at the mercy of any foe. In time, when the fresh antlers had attained their full length and grown as hard and sharp as the shed ones, the useless velvet rubbed off against the tree-trunks, the sambhur would be ready once more to fight its rivals for the favour of some russet-skinned hind

Alas for the ill-fated animal! That time never came and its lordship of the Palace soon passed. One day, as the setting sun threw long shadows of the forest giants over the fast-springing new vegetation of the clearing around the ruin, the stag came back from feeding to its refuge in the Durbar Hall. Then out from behind a pile of fallen blocks of stone flashed a great black-and-yellow body—and a tiger sprang on the deer.

With one huge paw flung over his victim's farther shoulder the slayer seized the throat in his powerful jaws and jumped across the sambhur's back to the other side, thus violently wrenching the head round and breaking the neck. With a choking, burbling groan the stag sank to the ground. The lordship of the Palace had passed again.

When the tiger, his feast finished, had lifted his reddened muzzle from the torn carcase and, shaking his paws as daintily as any pet cat, licked the blood from them, he padded across the clearing to the small stream that bubbled from a moss-grown and broken marble fountain. He drank deep and washed his jaws, then looked about him for a place to sleep. The bats were flying in and out of the entrance to the Durbar Hall, so he approached it cautiously and looked in.

The shadowy chamber was empty; for the bandicoots and the snakes had heard him coming; and had gone to ground. From the upper part of the jagged opening, as well as from underneath the marble balconies outside the windows and from the ceiling, great rounded lumps of clay were hanging—wild bees' nests; but the insects had retired for the night.

As he stood hesitating a sudden rainstorm decided him. This lair would be dry, there was water near, the kill would furnish a meal for the morrow. Yes, the place would suit him, and he was gorged and sleepy.

So he passed in and the Palace owned a new master. Nag Samp's head was drawn back resignedly into the hole from which he had been watching the fresh intruder.

Next morning the rain had ceased and the sun shone, the first time for many weeks. The sleeping tiger was aroused by a chorus of angry squawks and snarls, and looking out through the gap in the wall, saw his dinner vanishing into the maws of a score of uninvited guests. The deer's carcase was hidden under a heaving mass of feathered bodies, into which jackals were thrusting their heads and withdrawing them with a hastily-snatched lump of meat in their bloodstained jaws to escape savage pecks from the curved beaks of the vultures covering the carrion and tearing the flesh from the bones. In the air above others of the foul birds were circling and swooping down to make a snatch at the prey, or, coming to earth, hopping forward to fight their way into the scrimmage over the feast.

The sight of the barefaced robbery was too much for the tiger. With an angry roar he sprang out at the thieves. The jackals bolted, tails down; the vultures tried to fly up, but several were either too gorged to move or could not disengage their curved talons in time, and perished under the crushing blows of the robbed one's paws. Seizing in his jaws the almost bare skeleton, the tiger dragged it into the Durbar Hall and sat growling out his rage over the meagre meal left him.

The greasy trail across the marble pavement attracted the attention of a few scouts from the ants' nests under the floor. They followed it up and, when they found the prize at the end of it, hurried back to head-quarters with the news; and at once long lines of eager insects came up from the dustrimmed, tiny holes to help the tiger to pick the bones.

He soon left them the skeleton and went out that night to find a more satisfying meal. He killed a young sambhur hind not far from the ruins and, gripping its carcase in his jaws, jerked it up on his back and despite its weight carried it home to his new lair. But this time he was careful to bring it inside the Durbar Hall, where already the skeleton lay cleared of every vestige of flesh by the industrious ants.

His reign in the Palace did not last long. A "rogue" elephant chanced to pass the ruins one morning and, moved by the insatiable curiosity of his kind, stopped to examine them. At the entrance he met the tiger

face to face, and with the quick ill-humour that marks all "rogues," took exception to his presence and charged him. The tiger did not wait to argue the question, but bounded past the great bully like a flash, and the place saw him no more, only the ants lamenting his going.

The new lord hesitated for a moment, debating whether to pursue or not. As he stood undecided, swinging his trunk, rumbling angrily deep in his throat, shifting restlessly from foot to foot, he was a picture of power and majesty, the incarnation of strength and dignity. Ten feet high at the shoulder, his big, well-shaped head with curving white tusks five feet in length, his deep chest and barrel, his short but sturdy legs, marked him a prince among elephants. There was no beast in all the jungle that could face him in fight; and, as he passed with stately mien into the Durbar Hall, it was inconceivable that any animal existed which could dispute his ownership of the Palace.

Yet in five minutes he was bolting, screaming in wild panic, tail and ears up, waving his trunk madly, beating his head and sides with it as he ran. All about him hovered a cloud of flying insects, settling on his eyes, his ears, his lips, crawling on his neck, his back, and stinging him with all the fierceness of their angry natures. For in entering he had blundered against a wild bees' nest, had knocked it down and been stung on the sensitive tip of his trunk in return. The pain drove him wild; and in short-sighted revenge he began to tear down all the wonderfully-made clay homes of the honeygatherers within his reach, until the maddened swarms flew out at him and, a hundred thousand Davids to one Goliath, drove the great giant in shameful rout.

Trampling down the springing undergrowth, breaking off the saplings, dodging the big trees, the elephant dashed through the great forest in blind panic, and his tormentors went with him, piercing his thick but soft skin with a million burning stings. Gradually some of them drifted back—to find a score of bandicoots licking the honey and eating the grubs in the broken combs that strewed the floor. With unabated fury the little warriors attacked them and sent them scampering in agony to their holes, all but two or three that, covered with fiercely stabbing bees, died there on the marble flags.

For days neither rats nor snakes dared show themselves out of their dens. Any-

thing that moved in the Durbar Hall was at once assailed by clouds of the murderous insects, and the spilt honey lay untouched and its sweet scent drifted out into the open air.

It reached the nostrils of one that relished it above all things and sought to find whence it came. And into the deserted chamber, silent but for the hum of the homeless bees trying to repair the damage, shambled an awkward, uncouth bulk, large as a young elephant, a ponderous beast with thick shaggy hair and spreading paws tipped with long nails.

It was a Himalayan bear, a giant of the ursine race, and like all its fellows passionately fond of honey. Its long tongue curled out of the red mouth, licking its chops with delighted anticipation as the little eyes noted the broken combs on the floor and the many nests still hanging inside and outside the Right above the entrance and almost within arm's length was a large one. Despising the fallen combs, Reech, as the Hindus called him, waddled underneath it, stood up on his hind legs and battered it with his fore paws. At once from out of it and elsewhere—for the bees are trade unionists and believe in sympathetic strikes -a swarm of little winged devils flew and attacked him fiercely. Brushing them from his face—the only place where they could get at him, for his hair was too thick to let them reach his skin elsewhere—he kept at his task until the great lump of clay fell and was shattered to pieces on the marble floor.

Reech curled himself into a ball over the fragments, beating the tormentors off his snout and eyes with his paws, while his long tongue searched the smashed combs, licking out the honey and the grubs. In vain the furious cohorts of the defenders stabbed at him. He brushed them in scores off his face and suddenly rolled over and over, crushing hundreds crawling over his body; then calmly continued his meal. He had come to stay.

The rats, the ants and the flies fattened under the sceptre of Reech the Bear, for while he ruled the Moti Mahal there were always pickings from his table. And at night he wandered into the jungle to look for more solid food than honey, and bandicoots and snakes were free to come out. Even the sulking Nag Samp emerged once and snatched up a young rat. Reech's reign promised to be a lengthy one, for there were enough bees' nests left in his new den

to keep him in sweets for a long time. But his sins followed him.

A month before he was breaking into an anthill in the forest; for next to honey he liked white ants. A young woodcutter, a lithe and graceful brown-skinned boy of fifteen, naked but for a scanty loincloth, came upon him by accident, and, angry at being disturbed, the surly bear with one downward crushing blow of his great paw struck the lad dead to the ground with shattered Two hours later his father found him and realised what had happened, although Reech had disappeared. Painfully carrying his son's body, he climbed to his hut in the mountains over the forest, gave it into the arms of his screaming wife, then took up and loaded his gun. For he was the village shikari, or hunter, and as such was permitted to possess an old gaspipe muzzle-loader, with which by dint of patient tracking and cautious waiting he had killed more than one tiger and panther and gained the Government rewards for their slaughter.

Henceforth no animal existed for him but his son's slayer, and he set out to trail it. He tracked it from the scene of the tragedy into the foothills, but lost it there. He gave his days up to the search, starting out before dawn in the hope of meeting it returning to its den after its nightly wandering; but his luck was out. His shrewish wife nagged him because he wasted his time on a beast for the destruction of which a poor reward of five rupees was offered; whereas twenty-five were paid for a panther and fifty for a tiger, and their skins would fetch money But Nadu was deaf to her reproaches and devoted all his energies to avenging his boy's death. He was unrelenting in his pursuit of the bear.

He found it at last. One day at dawn, as Reech waddled contentedly back to the ruins after a night's roaming in the jungle, the solemn silence of the forest was shattered by a loud explosion, and the great beast pitched head foremost over the threshold of the Durbar Hall and lay dead. The traitor ants swarmed around the dark, warm patch spreading slowly under the lifeless body. And with a fierce joy the *shikari* rushed in and plunged his home-made knife again and again into the murderer of his son.

The remembrance of the reward prevented him from damaging the skin any further for his revenge was satisfied and five rupees are a big sum to a poor Hindu peasant. So, having flayed the bear, he rolled up the pelt to carry it away and show it when he claimed the reward. Then, hungry and thirsty, he went out to where he had lain in hiding and picked up a ragged cloth in which were wrapped a handful of parched grain, a few leathery chupatis or griddle-cakes, some coarse native tobacco, his waterpipe and a bottle of fiery liquor distilled from the blossoms of the mohwa tree, the flowers of which intoxicate the insects, birds and beasts that flock eagerly to eat them.

All through the long weeks of his weary tracking he had drunk nothing except water; but he had carried that bottle to help him rejoice when his enemy lay dead. And now, sitting on the floor of the great hall in which the Moslem oppressors of the Hindus had celebrated their victories over his faith and race, he toasted his own success.

As the potent spirit mounted to his brain he looked around the ruined chamber with a patronising eye. Some famous maharajah had owned it, no doubt—well, he, Dadu, was a great warrior too, and worthy of being well lodged, instead of living in a reed and bamboo hut with a sharp-tongued shrew to make his life a misery. He would take up his abode here, live in this palace alone

and in peace; he would slay all the beasts of the forest, for never was there a greater hunter than he.

As he drank he saw all the fiercest animals of the jungle crowding around him—tigers, panthers, wild boars, bears and man-killing rogue elephants; yet before his fiery glance they cowered in fear. He raised his hand and they fled. He got up to follow, but his legs betrayed him and he fell unconscious beside the empty bottle.

The sun sank, the swift Indian night came, and Nadu lay so still that the rats crept out to pick up the fragments of his scarce-tasted meal. He awoke with an aching head and, bewildered by the darkness, rose and staggered towards the faint light of the gap in the wall. And his silent naked foot trod on Nag Samp gliding across the floor to surprise a bandicoot. He curled a swift coil about the shikari's leg and struck once, twice. With a shriek the bemused man awoke to the realisation of what had happened, sprang forward, tore the snake from its hold and fled madly out into the exterior darkness. Half an hour later he was dead.

And once more the old cobra was Lord of the Palace.



THE GARDEN AT THE HEART.

EVERY life, of valour unrecorded,
Those for whom fame never wrote a part,
Yet with whom the world goes well, though softly,
Keeps a secret garden at the heart.

You may only see a bowl of flowers, Drooping on a city window-ledge; But it broadens to a wider margin, Hidden, like a warbler in its sedge.

Mine is a blue garden, with green edges, Where all day tall fountains toss and play; Dust of dreary streets where I must wander Melts beneath that cool, refreshing spray.

Rose or lily set, yet never lonely,
Is that secret, scented thoroughfare;
Since, with hand upon a timeless dial,
Memory keeps her tryst for ever there.
ETHEL M. HEWITT.

TWO UP

By FREDERICK WATSON

ILLUSTRATED BY G. D. ARMOUR

HANGE is notoriously fickle, and it may be assumed that if the Percival brothers had continued in their snug eighteenth-century house at Hampstead, surrounded by their little kindly interests and their excellent philanthropies, the state of Charles would have remained secure. The Percival brothers had the greatest possible affection and admiration for Charles, who was not only a nephew (which is less than nothing), but a counsellor and kind of advisory board.

The Percival brothers were twins of delightful similarity in contour, rosiness and simplicity, which is surely the most desirable state for twins to be in. They were the most jolly and ingenuous of persons, whom fortune had never hounded to labour, and undue intelligence had never driven to philosophical abstractions. Being innocent and without dyspepsia, life was for them a state of joy. They were delighted with one another, they were avowed bachelors, and they conceded their little worries to Charles. It is therefore extremely important to study the dossier (as they say in detective novels) of Charles. He was neither hilarious nor tranquil. He was as retiring and academic as his uncles were buoyant and homely. He moved with absolute rectitude and discretion about their affairs, and for the rest was most happy when upon a darkening winter's day he could stir up the fire in his library and forget he was alive at all. But on the other hand he was by temperament one of those fidgety, uneasy, highsouled persons who would have stood up to Nero better than to nerves.

It was consequently a nasty jar to Charles when, as a little surprise, the brothers Percival broke the tidings (which they were confident would electrify him) that they had taken a country place. It did not electrify Charles, because that was not possible, but it did lower him a good deal in temperature. He could regard the transports of Uncle William and Uncle Henry only with extreme reticence. William, blind to the weather

forecast, burbled of brooks; and Henry, ignorant that there was a severe cyclone assembling, actually smacked Charles on the shoulder—a thing Charles had seen amongst the more objectionable type of stranger, but never of course cared about himself.

"Crumpton Court, my boy!" he shouted.
"Hunting!" thrust in William, and added
in a rather foolish way, "Tally-ho—huic
forrard!"

Charles recoiled. He had always abominated sporting noises, and emitted by his dear uncles they made him feel most uncomfortable. Then he recovered himself. He remembered Abraham Lincoln. simply rose and regarded them with a fond but sorrowful gaze. They were, after all, his care. A kind of Virginia and Kentucky. This was, he realized at once, their Indian summer. Once past, they would regain the Hampstead peace of classical repose. door would gently close upon the past. would fade and be no more. With the untarnished patience and, if necessary, the heroism of a Lincoln, he would do what he could. "Hunting and fishing." Certainly. Yes, he was of course delighted. Surprised? Well, perhaps a little. They beamed upon him, and thrust the leasehold and a bundle of other documents into his hand. they waited, a shade diminished in buoyancy. Charles realised he must never let them know. He must do his duty. Simmering faintly with such an historic resolution, he produced a wan smile like a watery flicker of evening sunshine before a jolly old thunder-

"Hunting," he murmured. "That will indeed be nice."

And for a time Charles was in fact lulled into resignation. At Crumpton House the garden was lovely, the scenery tranquil, the weather considerate, and his uncles were harmlessly engaged in endeavours to ride. He even cherished a fantastic notion that when autumn came they would tire of such childishness, and crave for town. But the Percival brothers, having acquired a certain

uneasy tenure of their saddles, came one morning to Charles (whom they consulted on all things), and said with amiable smiles that they had decided to start a hunting stable. The stud groom kind. Charles heard them in silence. He made it a habit with William and Henry never to argue, discourage or deny. That was not his business. But a Zulu infant could have seen he was not amused.

"Miss Rawlinson is all for it," came in a

muffled voice from William.

"She has given us leads over tree-trunks,"

said Henry eagerly.

"As a start. Simply until we get our grip," hurriedly amended William, in case Charles ran away with silly ideas.

that charming Victorian reflection, the moment was rather strained. Charles had never associated his uncles with—well, with little escapades of the kind.

"This Miss Rawlinson," he pursued distantly, "she is, I presume, a schoolgirl."

"Not on your life," corrected Henry.

"She'll never see thirty again," admitted William.

"One of those fat, hearty women," concluded Henry with unmistakable approval.

Charles wilted. He was one of those highly refined men who can never look upon the Sunday joint without pallor.

"The fact is, Charles, you must meet her. She is one of the real old sporting squireens."

"Squireen?" echoed Charles with disgust.



"And who is Miss Rawlinson?" inquired Charles coldly.

They both blushed a good deal.

"As a matter of fact," laboured Henry, "she lives at Breeze Hall, just over the hill."

"You were so deep in your book, Charles old man, we simply couldn't worry you before."

"I see," said Charles in a sombre voice.

"I knew he would," broke out Henry, with a feverish look at William.

"Charles will be giving us all a lead—the sly dog," put in William noisily.

How true. Often in years to come did

How true. Often in years to come did Henry turn to William and remind him of those careless words. Apart, however, from "Perhaps there isn't such a word, but she's like somebody in Surtees."

"I'm afraid," intruded Charles firmly, "I've no knowledge of Surtees—none."

"Of course not, Charles. Neither has Henry," said William soothingly. "Margaret—I mean——"

"Margaret!" echoed Charles loudly, and

William cast a stricken glance at his brother, who regarded him with undeserved contempt and indignation.

"Did I say Margaret?"

"I can only presume that is Miss Rawlinson's name," said Charles.

"Charles," almost sobbed poor William, you are cross."

"He might well be," thrust in Henry

savagely.

"Not cross, Uncle William," corrected Charles more gently, "only a little taken by surprise."

That concluded the painful scene.

But the second episode was no less disconcerting. Charles had made it his business to see Miss Rawlinson. Without being simply vulgar, it must be said that presented no problem. Miss Rawlinson was just as catalogued. She was a very abundant, weather-beaten lady, a genuine specimen of early English, and in fact prodigious. She was also very wealthy indeed, and quite Charles could not help being acquainted with such things. She had, he also gathered, an intimate knowledge of beagles, otters, harriers and foxhounds, and hunted one or other of them year in and year out as part of the high calling of our Western civilization. When she was not on the trail she was facing a roast fowl or breaking in a three-year-old. A wonderful woman. The last of the Rawlinsons of Breeze Hall. He interviewed her in her library, which as a matter of fact was a famous if neglected He found her, so far as he could judge, unsuspicious of the interest of his dear uncles. Having assured himself of this, Charles returned more briskly, and encountered the new stud groom. Mr. Slowberry had seen the best service, and was as like a horse as a man could hope to become. He weighed about eight stone, possessed the gaitered legs of a child in the third standard, and a countenance from which all simplicity had taken flight. Charles, greeting him coldly, moved on. Suddenly he was aware that his Uncle William was beckoning. He drew close and, after a moment's uneasy silence, remarked with a blush:

"Charles, I have something to tell you."
Unconsciously Charles assumed the air of a startled matron. He recoiled, gave a faint shudder, remembered Abraham Lincoln, and knew it meant war.

"I find it difficult to speak calmly," confided Uncle William with evident emotion. "I have received a very great shock."

"You are not in trouble, I hope?" asked

Charles with reservation.

"Worse, Charles. I am in love. Don't start aside. I thought you would have suspected. Surely you have noticed something?"

"I have noticed a number of things," said

Charles severely.

"Ever since I saw Margaret taking a stiff

post and rails I have been in a dream. Now I have wakened, Charles. It is not pleasant."

"It is providential, Uncle William. Nothing could be more undesirable. I am

 ${f glad.}$

"You don't understand, Charles. I have been basely deceived, my boy—basely. While I moved in an enchanted world, the impossible was happening beneath my nose. It is a nightmare. After all these years. Charles, I have been betrayed!"

"By whom, Uncle William? The

Vicar?"

"By your Uncle Henry. In a fashion so insidious I can hardly credit it he has wormed his way into her affections. That a fat little man like that can hope to win a fine woman's love may strike you as merely funny. Does it, Charles?"

Charles gave no indication of merriment. He uttered no soothing word. He ceased to wonder what Abraham Lincoln would have done. He was pondering some reply not merely insulting when he realised that Uncle William had gone. He was glad. He wanted to be quite alone for a long time—preferably for ever.

"Charles—at last!"

Beside him was Uncle Henry.

"I thought I saw that fellow sneaking about, Charles. I say that I thought I saw your Uncle William. To think, my dear boy, how I have been deceived all these years. What hypocrisy, what vanity, what absolute effrontery! He knew very well how things were. All the world knew. I even read him a little couplet I wrote, beginning:

'Fair Diana on your mare, Is it nought my heart is sair?'"

"Perhaps, Uncle Henry," interrupted Charles roughly, "you will be more explicit."

"The situation," said Henry, with a barely suppressed groan, "is this. Your Uncle William, though perfectly aware I am practically engaged to Margaret Rawlinson, has gone so far as to propose. William of all people—a man who looks sixty."

"How do you know, Uncle Henry? What evidence have you he has proposed?"

"What was he doing on his knees in the Italian garden? Grovelling—simply grovelling. A man so fat he had to roll over to get up."

"And so?" asked Charles.

"And so," blazed Henry violently, "I have issued a challenge."

"To Uncle William?"

"He is your uncle, not mine. To me he

is an invidious toad. I have issued a challenge. It is carefully thought out and you will admit fair to both parties, and in the event of a fatality—I say," repeated Henry less loudly, "in the event of something happening, no one will be the wiser."

"Not-er-not pistols?"

"No, Charles—horses. I have challenged your Uncle William to follow hounds at the next meet to the kill, or every subsequent meet to the kill, and the first man in at the death wins Margaret."

"I see. When does this challenge take

place?"

"To-morrow, Charles."

He rose and went towards the stables. But Charles remained. He sat lost in meditation. It was of course essential, whatever the means employed, that his uncles should be restored to one another.

II.

Some day when the world is so perfectly organised that even the most sensitive mind will not be conscience-driven to write a column upon the primeval savagery of nonanæsthetised mouse-traps, our descendants will read wonderful old legends of the days when lords and ladies rode upon horses, wore barbaric scarlet coats, and made strange sounds upon a horn. The records will further narrate that the leader of this mettlesome band was called the Master. and was elected to that intrepid post by reason of his fierce oaths and capacity for remaining with his horse while leaping railway crossings and the miserable cottages of the crushed and obsequious peasantry.

Henry, feeling pretty badly, was standing at the head of the avenue when he heard the sharp crack of a hunting-crop. It rang out in that cold autumnal air, blue with haze and some invisible wood fire, the trees turning to copper with all the splendour of November. The steady clip-clop of horses at hound pace. Through the falling leaves a flash of scarlet, like a vision of pageantry, the first whip crossing the bridge on his irongrey. At the top of the hill, silhouetted against that cloudless vault of heaven, figures were moving down the painted woods—coming to the Meet.

"Sir!"

It was Slowberry.

"I carried out your orders, Mr. Henry."

"Successfully?" asked Henry, with a lingering faith in Providence.

"Nothing could be better, sir. If you

want to win, just release that 'orse. He's an old 'chaser turned rogue."

Henry quailed to his boots.

"A hard 'orse, sir, that won't stand no monkeying about. Give 'im the freedom of the country, sir."

"Is it better, Slowberry, to go fast or

slow?"

"That depends, sir. But for anyone not partial to a ton of slashin' 'orse flesh a-rollin' on 'em, I always says jump fast, and when you falls, you falls alone. But not over 'igh gates or stiff timber. Nor likewise over walls, which is better taken nice and temperate. But rivers, sir, and hedges and places where there may be an 'orrible ditch on the blind side, I says fast and 'earty for your neck's sake, in a manner o' speakin'."

Henry felt a sudden craving to go quietly away and die. He wished he could meet William. He would have liked to let him know he was forgiven before the end.

But William was far away, listening to Spigot, the head groom, in the stables, and staring at a savage sixteen-hand blood horse with deepening horror and aversion.

"He's a yellow peril if ever there was one," Spigot was saying in a kind of ecstasy. "He'd jump the Thames at Putney, sir, without so much as look at it. Blind of a heye. They called him 'Homicidal Herbert' in the racing stables where he came to grief."

William met the lambent hatred in

Homicidal Herbert's lonely eye.

"I want to give Mr. Henry a chance," he said faintly.

"Chance, sir? Don't you worry. Hercules is one they tried out for the National,

only he tops his fences."

A few-too few-moments, and all round them from every lane and bridle path the field assembled. There were thoroughbreds that would be certain of their three hundred guineas at Tattersalls'. There were hunters, those good short-legged, old-fashioned sorts who will get there even if they have to crawl under a few and rap some others. There were seasoned farmers on cobs like Clydesdales, and adolescent farmers on raking half-broken youngsters all nerves and sweat and eager, fidgety ways. There were the Miss Havilands from Houlder Court, very neat and sixty if a day, with tanned wind-ruddy faces like damsons, mounted on two hardy aged polo ponies their nephew Jim had relegated to them six seasons back. There was Major Sweeting on a nice amiable. bay who never asked for trouble and consequently never found it. There was Mr. Binyon who had only taken to hunting as a sensible man accepts the inevitable, and could be seen, magnificently mounted, jolting painfully homewards after the first covert.

Both Henry and William felt it their duty as mortal enemies, great lovers and honourable hosts, to strike a jovial and almost bacchanalian note. It pained Charles inexpressibly.

"Poor scent, I'm afraid, Colonel."

Charles stiffened at gaze. It was Uncle William speaking to the M.F.H. He had uttered with every appearance of a commonplace a highly technical and controversial comment.

"On the other hand," asserted Uncle Henry, glaring at the other great lover,

"scent should be red hot."

The Master smilingly acquiesced with both gentlemen. He made a point of never disagreeing with effusions of the field. He was of the opinion that the only real menace to hunting lay in the astonishing collection of persons who persisted in coming out.

"I thought of drawing Hangman's Spinney first," he said to humour them; "if there's nothing doing there we'll cross the river and try for a gallop towards Deeping. It's a nice country if you look out for wire by

Hobden's Dingle."

At those thoughtful words both brothers took a glass of port. "Wire by Hobden's Dingle." Henry thought he had never heard any remark so ominously simple in its rural beauty as "wire by Hobden's Dingle." It struck him as a monstrous thing that farmers should be allowed to endanger the limbs and lives of their fellow-countrymen. William thought so too. For a moment the brothers cast at one another a sad, reproachful glance. It said quite plainly, "To this melancholy end have you brought me."

The brothers then walked slowly apart,

turned and faced each other.

"You understand the terms, William?"
"I do, Henry. Whoever finishes the run
has the right to propose to Miss Rawlinson."

"And that, if he fails to be accepted, the second party to the duel may—if alive—

propose."

"Further, that Miss Rawlinson has been informed by Charles, without mention of names, that a gentleman will seek her hand to-day."

"And that Miss Rawlinson has agreed verbally to remain indoors for that solemn event."

Both brothers, struggling with emotion, then turned to their horses. Their emotion positively soared. Beside Henry was Slowberry with Hercules. It was shaking and quaking with irrepressible spirits and It would have made a poet feel quite queer to see that horse churning the gravel and lashing out at the civilised world. It made Henry feel much queerer. And yet he rose to the occasion. He only wished he could have risen to the stirrup. Grasping the reins, he laid a boot on the groom's frail back, sprang desperately, shot the groom into the rhododendrons, and reached the saddle. But he was there. How long he would stay there he could not

William mounted from a chair. He thought that Spigot, who had all the air of the weighing-in room before the National, exchanged a look of triumph with Slowberry.

The first covert was drawn blank, and Henry, who found Hercules (which was the heartless name some realist had given him) just possible to hold so long as the others kept walking about, began to gain that reaction of confidence which is so near the tears of things on a hunting morning. And so they came to Bolter's Wood; and if it hadn't been called that already, it certainly would have been ever after. For hardly had they reached it, hardly had Alfred, the first whip, cantered up to the lower end of the spinney, hardly had the huntsman uttered a solitary toot on his horn, than there was a crash of music, and hounds were away like smoke. So without pause or speculation were Henry and William. For one instant Hercules flung himself into the closest possible resemblance of a public memorial to an eminent general curveting home after some historic national reverse. Then he left. For a snort of time William's Highflier II cast his baleful glance at Hercules—then he too was a thing apart. Before the field had time to find the soft place in the nearest fence the brothers were over it, and the great race for Margaret had commenced.

Hercules was built for speed, and he liked speed. The more he was pulled the more he bored and flung himself, and conveyed a deepening sense of human frailty to anyone associated with him. That was why Mr. Slowberry in a wager had backed Henry, with a further fiver that Miss Rawlinson, so long as she was dead sure she didn't miss both, laid for William. Whereas Mr. Spigot, the head groom, was all for William, by which of course one means Highflier II.

He happened to know about Highflier. Rather more than Mr. Slowberry, if the truth be told. In fact all there was. He said no more. Both gentlemen stood, with keen ferret faces, on diminutive childlike legs beside the first jump. It was quite a snorter in its way. One of those jumps with a bad take-off to a stiff-made fence and a bighearted ditch on the other side. William and Henry came at it together, and they came at it fast. Hercules and Highflier preferred it like that, as they had been in training stables. But Hercules had during his long and wicked past learned some sound home truths about jumping, and one of them was to take off early and jump big. He was quite an adventure for strangers. Henry had read all the standard books about the forward seat, but Hercules really called for a reference book to himself. It was a poignant moment for Mr. Slowberry, but Henry was still a passenger when land was reached. William fared better. Highflier was a smooth runner. But he was temperamental. Many a good race had been simply chucked away by his moodiness, and his nasty habit of throwing his jockey and chasing him over the course had led to several actions and, on the last occasion when he appeared in public, strong words from the coroner.

From that moment Hercules led. He simply stared with fanaticism at hounds, and pushed along at a park paling with incredible velocity. Hounds raced on a breast-high scent. They had come on a traveller, and he was heading home. pace was tremendous. Henry tried a pull on Hercules. Nothing happened. Probably it might tickle his iron mouth when the bells were ringing for Evensong. So Henry handed him the freedom of the city, and wondered how any horse could expect to jump a hedge twenty feet high. Hercules never attempted to jump. He went through. He knew a heavy horse and man can smash by sheer avoirdupois through anything short of a signal-box. But Henry was swayed by emotionalism, and Hercules arrived alone. Henry knew that for him the hunt was over and Margaret another's. A minute later, and over him soared William. All was indeed over. He heard running footsteps. People were afraid he was terribly injured. Perhaps he was. Comforters were beside him. He crawled painfully out, and felt a hot flood of indignation. Hercules was waiting.

"Bolt, you ugly brute," snarled Henry, and threw a lump of mud.

The footsteps reached the hedge. Through the gap scrambled Mr. Slowberry, evidently in extremis, and yet, honest man, exceedingly strongly worked up about it all.

"A nasty fall," Henry began with a brave smile, when to his surprise Mr. Slowberry laid firm hands on him and hurried him towards Hercules.

"'E's arright," he panted. "Gerrup, sir." It was unbelievable.

At the same moment Mr. Spigot, smiling evilly, came quite leisurely through the hedge.

"Be a sport, Jim!" shouted Mr. Slowberry hoarsely; "don't be dawg in a manger."

Stung to the quick, Mr. Spigot grasped Henry by one leg, and with a heave he was on.

"Sit down and ride, sir!" shouted both gentlemen, and Mr. Slowberry also did a very ungentlemanly thing. He gave Hercules a sharp lash with his crop. It made it a moral certainty Hercules would not stop again.

Far ahead, William rocked in his saddle and wished he had the courage to fall off. He had only one consolation. Margaret was his. It was quite unlikely Henry would ever remount. It was best so. Margaret had more than hinted Henry was just—how did she put it? But at that moment Highflier wearied of junketing alone, and refusing with instantaneous precision a broad and sluggish brook, brought a song of praise to Slowberry's aching heart.

Hercules entered the same field just as William reached the surface. The bed of that loathsome stream was like a vice. It held William whether he cared about it or not. He was facing the long trail home, so he could not help watching Henry coming like a Derby favourite over the flat. He also observed behind Hercules the hurrying figure of Mr. Spigot, honest man, no doubt in a state of great perturbation about him. William's insight into human nature was a credit to him. Mr. Spigot was talking aloud with worry.

On came Hercules. On came—if it is necessary to add this—Henry. His hat was off, his stock was gone, his coat was slit. But he was there, and looking at William with deepening attention. It became beyond academic speculation that Hercules was making straight for William. Henry knew that to jump William would not do. There were in such affairs—no matter how hot the provocation—the decencies.

"Hi!" shouted William, suddenly aware that by the elementary laws of mechanics a stationary object is certain of trouble when it lies in the course of something in violent motion.

Henry took a frenzied pull on Hercules. It startled that regrettable horse. He gave him a whack over the ears. Hercules lost his temper. He made straight for William. The take-off was rat-worked, and the rabbits had done their bit on the other bank. It was a sure thing William must go under or perish. With a bitter cry he did so just as Hercules took off.

They still speak of that great performance.

What concerns us is Henry. Stricken with remorse, Henry abandoned Hercules half-way over; and as William rose, Henry, with all the goodwill in the world, submerged him for the third and last time. The position was now very delicate. Both horses were gone, and both rivals were equal. They were, so to

Upon the bank Mr. Spigot stared at the shivering competitors with a perplexed and

speak, minus two

at the turn.



"He also observed . . . the hurrying figure of Mr. Spigot, honest man, no doubt in a state of great perturbation about him."

Strangers still come and stare at the exact spot where Hercules left earth, and again just where he landed. I forget what it measures and whether it was in yards or feet, which is important. Let it be said that he achieved the brook and William and was seen no more.

ruminating countenance. Then, aware that time was money, he cut off a long branch and hurrying back cried, "Catch 'old, Mr. William. Never mind Mr. 'Enry. I'll get 'im out later. Quick, 'ere's Slowberry, a-comin' like a motor car, I don't think."

565 TWO UP.

The brothers Percival, cemented shoulder to shoulder in the mud, regarded Mr. Spigot without affection. Then turning, William remarked while he altogether closed one eye towards Spigot:

"Henry, I have been thinking. Let me

"My dear Henry, what is any woman worth if she comes between us? I will explain to her we have made a tremendous mistake."

Henry laid a muddy hand on William's shoulder. "There is such a thing as duty,"



"Henry took a frenzied pull on Hercules. It startled that regrettable horse. He gave him a whack over the ears. Hercules lost his temper. He made straight for William."

persuade Margaret to marry you while you

are drying."

To which Henry answered, "No, no, old boy. I'm more the old bachelor than you. If I run ahead I'll plead your case, old man." He made a furtive gesture to Spigot indicating bullion.

he said nobly. "A woman must not be broken-hearted. I'm younger than you, Bill."

"But you look older, Margaret said so, Harry.

"Never mind what she said. If it comes to that. . . . Bill, please," and Henry edged

a foot nearer the world of love and glamour. The pole, quick, Spigot!"

"That's my pole," snarled William, and with a supreme effort grasped it.

"Let it go," screamed Henry.

William released it and achieved a distorted smile.

"There is a solution," he said with admirable simplicity. "Charles."

"What can Charles do?"

"He will explain to Margaret. I suggest

that we put the matter in his hands." "I will see him. Leave it to Bill."

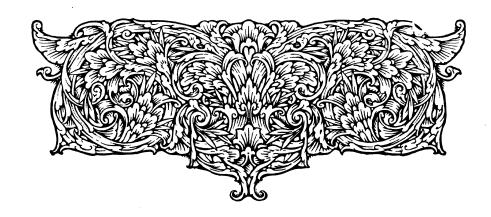
"I think I should explain better, Harry, old bov."

In the silence that followed old Slowberry panted to the brink.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," he gasped, Miss Rawlinson . . ."

"What?" shouted the brothers Percival.

"She's eloped with Mr. Charles!"



LUCKY CHAP.

YE got a little cosy cot, I've got a little garden plot, An' a Windsor easy old arm-chair, An' a pipe to smoke when I sits there. I sits out in the sun for hours, Among old-fashioned garden flowers, The stocks, sweet williams, an' pinks, An' as I sniffs their scent I thinks, Well, what I thinks, 'twixt you an' me, Is "What a lucky chap I be!"

I looks around me an' I sees, A mass o' blossom on the trees, I sees the honey bee so spry, An' butterflies a-bobbin' by, I sees a swallow flit an' pass, Above the daisies in the grass; I watches everythin' that grows, From a tater to a cabbage rose, An' as I sits I says to me, "Well! What a lucky chap you be!"

G. S. CHAPMAN.



"They were lost to the thoughts of the two men before ever they had reached the bend of the lane,"

A QUESTION OF LOCALITY

By L. A. PAVEY

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

YOUNG ANTHONY FORREST, seated by the side of his father in the big touring car (which for the four days of their wanderings he had driven himself, their man being left at home), was privately thinking that this kind of thing—this exploration of lanes made, apparently, only for the passage of handbarrows—could be taken too far.

But it was not for him, he knew, to breathe a word of this into the parental ear, sticking out there, close to him, red and fierce and aggressive. It was the sort of ear to make you think twice as to what you said to it. But, really, with a parent whose idea of a country tour in an English summer is, primarily, to visit every town and village bookshop, second-hand shop and barrow (and he almost added "dustbin"), and who combines this in the most eccentric fashion, with sudden cross-county swoops to regions he believes to be the country of his books-"literary" country-and all this in a high-powered touring car built for swift travelling on main roads—yes,

he thought the proceedings generally might perhaps be described by a judicial observer as calling for some little comment.

But he did not speak to his father, even when they rocked over tree-roots on one side of the track, with the other wheels delicately shaving the side of a ditch by the ungenerous margin of a quarter of an inch. Possibly, however, Mr. John Forrest thought the moment opportune for some sort of justification (though he by no means always bothered to supply it in such circumstances), for he turned to gaze at the leafy walls past which they were scraping with a gaze of benign approval.

"This is it," he said, "Tamplin Lane. Just the width, just the appearance. All the same sort o' hedges, too, eh? Thingumybobs and whatd'youcallems, mixed."

It did occur to Anthony that that particular lane, in that particular countryside, might be seen by the score. Indeed, they had already been down four of them—or, rather, three and a half. They had met, in the middle of the last, a farm tractor.

and had been forced to retreat. His father's comments had lasted an hour—he being convinced that at the moment he was on the verge of a great literary discovery (which, however, he did not particularise). Anthony did not contest the theory that thingumybobs and whatd'youcallems, when mixed, make a Tamplin Lane rather than any other lane. It wasn't worth it, really. Why not let parents enjoy themselves, even if their methods were peculiar?

"Sure of it," pursued his father. "West of Blunton, and east of Tennit Howe, eh? Hugh Falkner knew what he was about to take this country, eh? Lovely, lovely! Yes, Tony, my boy—the original Tamplin Lane in Children of the Weald. Read it,

eh ? "

Anthony had not. He hadn't had time that summer to read—hardly even, he might have informed his parent, the minimum reading required by his College authorities. Many more important matters had occupied him fully—stopping hot shots at cover-point, for instance, and trying to make that half-cock shot past the bowler a safe one. But again he did not detail a reply. He merely shook his head.

But that was sufficient to rouse the parental fire. "Not, eh? Got it here. First edition! Picked it up in Williscombe—remember that little second-hand shop?

Ninepence. I'll get it!"

It was like Mr. John Forrest not to have time to stop the car before swivelling round to haul a bundle of books from the back seat. There was a crash; that part of one of the hedges alleged to have been immortalised in Children of the Weald was looking decidedly less like a hedge, and certainly not one that you would immortalise at first sight. And the touring car, though still a car, was rendered somewhat less effective by the smashing of a near-side axle. Anthony pulled his impetuous parent back from the middle of some sweet-smelling briar, finding meanwhile that a set of knuckles cut by a broken windscreen rather hampered him.

When they finally stood up to survey the scene they moved about on books. Books were around them in the lane and in the ditch. Some of them even festooned the hedge, and adorned the turnip field on the other side. Mr. John Forrest blow. "My reeled under $_{
m the}$ first " My editions!" $\mathbf{moaned}.$ $_{
m he}$ editions!" Anthony, sucking thoughtfully at his knuckles, picked up at his feet a

copy of an early Lamb. The cover hung loose, and half the pages were twisted. "Looks older still now," he said.

"That was partly uncut, too," lamented

his father.

"It isn't now," returned Anthony grimly.
"Well, well, we'd better look at the car, and see what we can do—can't waste time.
We'll put the books in afterwards."

From his father's first quick survey of the car Anthony gathered that he thought of finishing on three wheels. Then with a shrug he apparently gave up motors as altogether impossible, as enemies of the human race, and turned to pick up, dust, wipe, mend, restore and replace books.

"I'd better cut along, I think," said Anthony, "and see if there's any sort of help to be got at Blunton. They might be able to send along from there to tractor

he car."

The necessity for that ignominious seal on the catastrophe appeared to convince Mr. Forrest Senior that he really had done it this time; but he could do no better than assent gloomily.

"You seem," said a pleasant voice behind them, at this juncture, "to have got into

difficulties."

Anthony and his father turned to face a rather languid (and slightly amused) gentleman, and a girl in the coolest of summer frocks and easy walking shoes regarding the scene critically. A fox-terrier was terrifically busy in the hedge. He appeared to think it had been broken down for his especial benefit.

"My dear sir," admitted Mr. Forrest,

"a very dickens of a spill."

"It rather looks, doesn't it," said the new-comer, "as though the car will have to be towed out of this? Though I don't know of a precedent—just here. It's a little unusual to see a car in this lane." His tone was gently, ever so gently, quizzical. "May I ask—do you often—er—take cross-country routes?"

Mr. Forrest felt himself on the defensive. "Quite often—oh, quite," he said decisively. "Lovely at this time of the year. I see the country close where I can, not through

the dust of the highway."

"I commend the notion, sir—— Though there are little difficulties, are there not, with a big car? Farther down this lane, for example, you'd have had to get through a pond before you reached the road again."

"Well, I've done that before," returned

Mr. Forrest. "Up to my axles, and

beyond."

"But possibly," went on the visitor, "you'd have got your books wet!" He surveyed the surrounding literature with interest. "An unusual sight for the lane, Peggy?"

"Yes, father," said the girl. "Gyp,

come out of that!"

The dog obeyed. Anthony thought he had heard music. What a voice!

Possibly his father thought so, too—but whether from indifference or experience his interest was not apparent, as the ingenuous

Anthony's was, more or less.

The careless-seeming and rather distinguished-looking man in the old tweed jacket stooped to pick up a book. Now the handling of a book by a book-lover is, of course, an entirely different affair from its handling by anyone else. Mr. Forrest seemed to receive the message at once.

"I think, now we're here, we must help you put your library back. I'm afraid it's all we can do at the moment; unless, meanwhile, you're sending to Blunton for help?"

"Yes, yes, off with you, Anthony, my boy. What's the good of cricket if you're not useful in an emergency? Half the things young men do nowadays, sir" (to the visitor), "have no practical use or significance."

Anthony might have retorted that he had at any rate so far managed to avoid hedges when driving cars; but quite

nobly refrained.

They began to pick up the books-But even at this juncture Mr. Forrest could not simply pick up books and stack them as though they were packets of stationery. He had to look at each one. He was so engrossed over one particular rediscovery a thing which is sometimes to a book-lover even more delightful than an original find —that he failed to notice his helper standing perfectly still and similarly rapt. Anthony the sight was a godsend; for he had been standing near the girl, with his tongue tied, and his poor brain working clockwise trying to think of something to say that would not sound absolutely banal. "Cricket—no; books-no; tennis—no, seems absurd; don't know her-Something light? What? And would it sound heavy as lead? Talk of the dog? I'd like to talk of her hair! Idiot! Dolt!full minute-one and a half-Anthony was getting hot.

But, in the silence of that Southern

English summer lane, two men were standing before a wrecked motor-car and piles of books—absorbed, lost, as though they had been in the British Museum.

Anthony smiled; and saw the lips of the girl curve slightly, deliciously. They laughed aloud—and two pairs of eyes turned to them reproachfully, as though their owners had been rudely awakened from what should have been continued peace.

"I thought," observed Anthony's father with dignity, "you were on the way to

Blunton?"

"Right, father, right," said Anthony hastily. "I'm off——" Oh! some luck, this leaving divinities for motor repairs! They would be gone, no doubt, before he got back. Unhappy Anthony went up the lane.

"Peggy," observed her father suddenly, without even lifting his eyes from the printed page, "he'll be going half a mile round unless you show him where that side-track goes off to meet the road. Will you?"

"Yes, father." Saved! Anthony would have heard that voice at a mile. Was it loud, then? No, soft; then why——? More problems for Anthony. Also, what could he——? Weather, tennis, books, motors? Oh, what it was to be a tonguetied ass——! He waited for her, in painful pleasure.

"I'm to show you a short cut towards Blunton," she called. "It will save you half a mile. Forgive my leading you, but this is our own particular country."

"Yes," said the ass Anthony, "yes—"
What a thing, to have inspired feelings, and the language of a clodhopping dolt!
Or not even that—he couldn't, in the circumstances, even speak of bread-and-cheese and beer—— He strove desperately. What should he do? Try to play himself in, or go for the bowling?

They were lost to the thoughts of the two men before ever they had reached the bend of the lane. Even the alluring shimmer of a summer frock through the greenery did not attract eyes following words set forth in new and cunning arrangements. They might have picked the books up in armfuls. They did not. They chose to lift each one delicately, brush it and examine it. Then they noted binding, publishers, date and edition—sampled it, stroked it tenderly, and reluctantly (and often with a sigh) stacked it thoughtfully in the car. There was, after all, no hurry.

So far as Mr. Forrest was concerned he had done his share. He had smashed up the car, and was waiting for help. And his visitor was presumably on a country stroll, and in no hurry either. The warm air was perfect, drowsy; the hedges (save four feet of one of them) lovely walls of early summer greenery. The lane was full of birds singing above the fallen library; the bees were droning contentedly.

Mr. Forrest's companion picked up a slim little green book from under the back place you'd consider likely, eh? It isn't damaged, is it?"

"Perfect," admitted the visitor, with the faintest note of reluctance which one might have ascribed to a rival, and added (thus confirming the note), "I've only the second impression myself."

"Ah!" observed Mr. Forrest. It was again a chortle-with rather too much

satisfaction in it, possibly.

"It inter



"Anthony and his father turned to face a rather languid (and slightly amused) gentleman, and a girl in the coolest of summer freeks and easy walking shees regarding the scene critically.

the elided 'e' on the title-page. You are

fortunate, my dear sir."

"I am," chortled Mr. Forrest, delighting in an appreciative word at last (he was rather glad the soulless Anthony had departed for a while—it made him feel easier when books were discussed). "Yes, I picked that up at Amblebury. Not a

rest less aggressively, observing a slight shadow cross the other's countenance, "to visit just the district Blacker was writing of in that book. I got it, I think, precisely. Altiford is the town, of course; and I even, by circling the district, located the farm-house he calls Ryelands. The countryside corresponds, the distance from

the well he speaks of corresponds, the very style of the chimneys of the farm and the placing of the windows too-although of course Ryelands isn't its real name. It's called Thicket Cross now."

"You must have explored closely," said his companion, "and you've observed, if I may say so, wonderfully well. And

"But how," he blurted out, suddenly hopeful, "if they're so much alike, do you know which of them is the farm-house in The Pitcher?"

The visitor smilingly forgave the slight rudeness for the eagerness of the inquiry.

"I know Blacker very well," he said gently.



"'You seem,' said a pleasant voice behind them, at this juncture, 'to have got into difficulties.'

though you're a little out in picking on Thicket Cross, the mistake is more than excusable—— It's almost the exact replica of a farm-house the same distance from Altiford, but north-easterly. In the middle of a big grazing-land they call 'Willison's Acres.' Did you ever hear of that?"

Mr. Forrest was taken aback. He had to admit that he had not heard of Willison's Acres.

again taken aback. And when he said, "How interesting," he really meant "How annoying." For he would rather have been left with his illusion concerning Ryelands, which it had taken him four hours on a wet

morning to locate, and for which he had missed lunch.

It rankled a little as he stacked two old leather folios of The Lives of the Martyrs in the car (even causing him to omit the wonted observance of a preliminary affectionate pat). Almost it seemed that this man had come strolling along a forgotten lane, almost impossibly, to rob him of his honoursAnd before he could stop himself he had said, "Well, sir, at least I think you must agree that I've found, here and now, the lane used by the lovers in The Children of the Weald? I imagine you live locally, but you're sure to know the book in any case. Falkner has almost reached highwater mark there. And he's made this district most peculiarly his own." Mr. Forrest proceeded to give reasons. "Note the direction—south-east—the distance from the village, which, of course, was Blunton—."

"The distance wasn't given," objected the other. "And in any case——"

"No," Mr. Forrest cut him short, in his anxiety to marshal his arguments, "but the lovers took half an hour to walk it. And (as lovers walk) that means about a mile and a quarter."

"I was just about to say," went on the objector, "that the village wasn't Blunton, but Wingham. You've overlooked the fact that Blunton hasn't the big square at the crossing of the main roads, the square, you remember, the young folk used to skirt instead of crossing in the open."

Mr. Forrest was terribly dashed once more.

But again he rallied.

"Ha!" he said, "what about the inns? Three of them—not the real names, of course, but three of them, nevertheless. 'The Five Feathers,' 'The Jolly Huntsman,' and 'The Anchor.' H'm? There are only two in Wingham. Know it! I was trying to put up there the other night!"

"The inn he called 'The Anchor,'" responded the other evenly, "was burned eighteen months back. That new little Branch Bank is built on the site."

Mr. Forrest was now utterly and entirely counfounded—and getting correspondingly disgruntled. He remembered the Branch Bank—— Really, the ways of an explorer were hard. Without admitting anything, he dropped the subject. He began to sling the books in, instead of packing them.

They completed their task, the visitor still examining the title of each book; and Mr. Forrest began to think again of the

main difficulty.

"Time they were back," he said, "quite time—— Your—er—the lady's with him, eh?"

"I expect she is," said the other imperturbably.

"H'm! H'm! Now let me show you this First of---"

Within half a minute time again meant

nothing to them. A quarter of an hour later Anthony and the girl rounded the bend, it being then five minutes over the time scheduled by Mr. Forrest as necessary for lovers. And Anthony did not, as he approached, appear to be tongue-tied. Also, whatever reputation he may have had as a sprinter, his pace over the last few yards of that particular journey dwindled down almost to non-existence.

"Well, Anthony, what luck?" asked

Mr. Forrest, somewhat dryly.

"It's all right, father. They're sending along to take it to Blunton. They should be here very soon."

"H'm, h'm—— Ought to have asked you to have looked out the time of our train. Must be in Willington to-night—must!"

"I think, Peggy, perhaps we can persuade our friends to pass an hour or two at home. And stay to dine perhaps——"

Anthony might have represented a statue

of Hope.

"Very kind of you, very kind indeed. But afraid it isn't possible. No. No, I must just see this car of mine on the way, and get on to Willington. Upset all my plans otherwise, I'm afraid. Should have been delighted—our meeting's been most enjoyable."

Anthony was bitterly aware that the "plans" concerned only further books and lanes, and that thereby he was losing a much fairer sight. What manner of men were fathers! Always the same—every good thing was rationed—— Five minutes in her company (it had been an hour and a half, Greenwich time) and he was being sped on to other lanes where girls wouldn't appear, and even if they did, they wouldn't be—— Oh, well, dash it! He turned to Miss Peggy to use good time while he had it.

The visitor glanced rather whimsically at the two, and went close to Mr. Forrest to remark, "Is yours a first edition too?" Mr. Forrest looked, brightened, and chuckled. "Yes; the best I have. The best I have, sir—— Though more expensive than any! Hullo, here's the car!"

The breakdown gang, consisting of two mechanics, had arrived. Whatever their surprise, the phlegm of the practical, working Briton prevented them from taking this trip on the virgin soil of the lane as anything but a pure matter of course—

Anthony's time was divided between helping his father to see the operations. through, and the girl to control the dog Gyp, who was profoundly excited by this influx of two-legged folk into his lane, hitherto given over entirely to all sorts of wonderful trails and scents——

They proceeded, at last, up the lane in the wake of the rescuers of the car (Anthony was drawing from the whole affair the most tremendous conclusion that motoring wasn't a patch on walking), and at the corner of the lane parted with the usual friendly protestations. Mr. Forrest urged his helper, should he himself ever need similar assistance in the neighbouring county, to look him out without fail, and with satisfaction, debt paid off. "That's the address," he card. "No said, as he handed him his card. chance," mused Anthony gloomily, "no chance of it at all. And it's I that owe the debt, for the sight of her-" He did not reflect that what he chiefly wanted to do was to plunge into debt more heavily.

They parted. His father stepped out briskly towards Blunton and the Willington train. "Nice people," he said cheerfully.

There was another fortnight of Anthony's Long Vacation to be spent at home, and he was out before breakfast on this particular morning wondering why the sun wasn't able to shine with proper efficiency, why the fish didn't bite in his favourite pools, why his dog even was too lazy to accompany him—why, in fact, the world in general had gone slightly flat and stale.

He turned in to breakfast—a lonely one, for Mr. Forrest was a widower, and Anthony's sister was away on a holiday visit -and attacked it as one performing a distasteful duty, noting, at the same time, with a jaundiced eye, that his county was steadily pursuing its losing career. "A good slow left-hand bowler, they want," thought Anthony morosely, "and a forcing bat at Number 6 or 7. But they can't get 'em." He knew, he thought, where they could get the forcing batsman. They did not appear to be aware of it, however. He had thought, after that talk with Anstey, that perhaps they meant— — "Dash it," he said, "a fellow couldn't help getting fifty at least on this wicket." He looked out gloomily on a perfect summer day.

There impinged on his ear the sound of somebody taking the stairs in threes.

"Well, Anthony," said his father, in that brisk A1 "efficiency first thing" voice which always made his son uncomfortable in the mornings, "well——" In

half a minute he was already in the middle of an egg and the second of his letters.

"I've got those two Merediths, Anthony. Great!"

Anthony munched on, steadily, and absorbed more cricket while his parent skipped through three book catalogues at top speed. Two chances had gone begging in the slips, he observed. That would be Watling, the ass. Good bat, though, Anthony admitted—

"Eh, what's this ?—Well, well. That's a knock-out blow! Listen, Anthony. D'you remember that argument I had with the fellow who came along when the car smashed up?" (Mr. Forrest invariably referred to that incident as an unaided effort of the car's, affected by no human agency.)

Anthony woke up, suddenly.

"Yes, father. What about him?"

Mr. Forrest tapped his letter.

"Why—Oh, but you wouldn't remember the argument. You were off with that girl. Deuced long time, too! I'd just been telling her father that I'd made the distance to Blunton fit in with the half an hour's walk at lovers' pace in *The Children of the Weald*. So you ought to have been back in fifty minutes or so, even allowing for your business at the garage. And you were away an hour and twenty-five minutes, young man—"

Anthony was getting red.

"Difficult to get the people to move, father. Wanted the dickens of a lot of explaining—— But what's he writing about?"

"Ha!— Well, the argument was as to the whereabouts of the lane Hugh Falkner makes the lovers use. I was just going to show you the passage when the car—"

Anthony restrained himself with an effort. "What about your letter-writer, father?"

"You mean," said Mr. Forrest dryly, "what about the father of his daughter?" He laughed. "Never mind, Anthony——"

Anthony mumbled something indistinguishable into a cup of coffee.

"Well, he is Hugh Falkner!"

Anthony stared.

"I might have thought" (plaintively), "mightn't I, knowing that he lived in the district, that any local inhabitant would be likely to know the lane? And it was himself, you see. Impetuosity, Anthony—my old failing!"

"Er-er-where does he live, exactly,

father?"

"Oh, he goes on to say that if I'd care to see his books—a collection worth seeing, he thinks—would I go over next week. Think I will!"

"You should, father, you should," said Anthony with enthusiasm. "Great idea.

I suppose—er—I——"

"Provision duly made, Anthony—' Bring your son, if he will come. Tell him there will, at all events, be tennis.'"

Anthony looked at him beatifically.

Cricket, what was cricket——!

"Next one's mis-sorted. For you,

Anthony."

Anthony opened it in a dream, and had read it hearing nothing but a voice saying "Forty—love," in a fashion quite incomparable. He comprehended it only at the third reading.

Then he sat up suddenly, and addressed

his parent.

"When are we going over to Mr. Falkner's?"

"The fifteenth, Anthony. Wednesday."
Anthony heaved a big sigh. "Twas ever thus.

It wasn't a thing to admit to a parent, but Anthony Forrest, half an hour later, went out to refuse—actually to re-fuse—his first invitation to play cricket for N—shire. In a match to commence on the fifteenth.

"After all," thought Anthony, "I expect they'll try me later. And even if they don't——!"

He wrote out a wire. "Out, Bob," he

said to the waiting terrier.

"Anthony," shouted his father, "if you're bound for the post, will you take this? It's to Falkner—before I forget it."

Before he forgot it!

Anthony vaulted the garden fence and made tracks for the local post-office.



THE TREE.

And its last roses and its woodland gleams, Its murmuring gardens and lit waters, seems Like April risen from the sepulchre:
So, too, in love there comes a mellow stir Recalling and renewing the first dreams, And often, dearest, this late fire redeems
The fugitive flame that in life's draught will err. It is the ripened heart that feels and knows
The eternal substance of divine romance.
Have not we twain matured our ecstasy?
It is no flower that desolately blows,
Dreading the north wind and all-culling Chance,
But an unshaken and deep-rooted tree.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

OLD TRINIDAD

By STEPHEN PROCTER

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE

THE office where he had worked for forty years was just beyond the Monument, but nine times out of ten he had alighted from his bus at the Tube Station on the South side of the water, that he might enjoy the walk across London Bridge. It was not often, however, that he crossed the bridge so late in the morning as this. Accustomed to the traffic and bustle of the "rush" hours, he found it strangely unfamiliar and deserted.

In fact he had the Eastward parapet almost to himself.

Luxuriously he yielded to the unfailing spell of the River, as it swirled laughing and dimpling in the sunlight with lazy certitude towards the sea. A branch of cherry or some white blossom from an up-river garden floated past. In his mind's eye he followed it on its adventurous course down-stream, dancing and diving past the bricks of Rotherhithe, past the smoke and dust of Woolwich, on to Tilbury, Gravesend, the ever-widening estuary, and—the sea. He pictured it breasting the first big waves, driven by the salt wind, tossed in the white foam of some big liner's bows, far out beyond the horizon. . . .

A fussy little tug-boat came panting up-stream. Like a schoolboy he judged the point at which it would pass, and leaning over on tiptoe drank in from above all the sounds, the sight, the scents of it. The gleaming brass, the plash of the paddles, the smell of the smoke and oil and tarry rope!

So had he done a thousand times before. So would he do probably never again.

There would be no need.

Arms folded on the parapet, he reviewed with a little smile the long servitude, the self-imprisonment of the past twenty years or more. He could afford to smile now. Against the muscles of his forearm on the bridge pressed that delicious bulge in his breast pocket which told of a secret known to none but himself and his banker. The

secret of a brand-new leather wallet, containing a cheque for no less a sum than five hundred pounds, "with interest to date," closing his account at the branch in Lewisham, and representing all that he had in the world.

For this moment he had lived the greater part of his life, and worked, and dreamed. Dear God, how he had worked!

One Romance had died, with the death of his young wife in giving birth to their only child. Well, perhaps not died. The boy had kept it alive, metamorphosed not diminished. Lionel would miss him, and he Lionel. It was the one little fly in the amber. But Lionel was young: his day would come. Meanwhile, the boy had his work to do, his own wife and little ones to look after. It would have been grand if they could have gone together, father and son. But it would not do. Lionel had done splendidly to be head of his department at Thurman and Taylor's already. He must stick to his last.

So not even Lionel knew of the secret, that other Romance, which had been growing in power and beauty all these years, the Romance that lay within that leather wallet.

How he had worked, when he came to look back, how he had saved!

Five hundred pounds takes some saving on a maximum of six pounds a week!

He drew out and lit a cigarette—his first for nearly thirty years. He could afford it now. All the tobacco he had never smoked, all the holidays he had never had, the delicacies he had never tasted, the theatres he had never entered, the luscious books of travel and adventure he had borrowed from the Free Library but rarely bought: all the overtime he had worked, the furtive jobs he had done in those annual ten days of enforced "holiday" from the office, all these had mounted up, at compound interest, until at last there they were in quintessence, compact, crystal-

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lised, tangible against his forearm on the

parapet

And to cap it all, they had given him a year's "Leave of Absence" from the office, without pay of course, but with promise of reinstatement on his return.

On his return! Aha! They little knew where he would return from. They thought he was going for a long rest to Bournemouth or some such commonplace retreat. How they had chaffed him for his one extravagance—second-hand Sea Songs and books from the threepenny book-stall!

"Old Trinidad!" they called him at the

office, the young dogs!

Perhaps it did seem strange to hear a dingy, dried-up office clerk continually humming to himself chanties of "the sea, the sea, the ever free."

He laughed as he took his cigarette from between his lips, and sang in a low, not unpleasing tenor:

"So, Westward Ho! for Trinidad,
And Eastward Ho! for Spain,
And Ship Ahoy! a hundred times a day.
Round the world if need be,
And round the world again..."

Well, they would understand soon. He would drop them a line from Trinidad. What a lark! And again from the "still vex'd Bermoothes," from "India's coral strand," from Sicily, and Rome. How it would make their mouths water!

He had fixed it all up with the tourist agents, with the exception of the necessary credits which he was now on his way to arrange. It was to be all the way by sea. Down the River, following the cherry-blossom, to Gravesend and Southampton. No "floating cities" for him, with their theatres and saloons and evening-dress, but snug little passenger-tramps that buried their noses in the foam when it was rough, and could not be depended on for time. There were more possibilities there!

He was particularly anxious to see with his own eyes a ship's biscuit with a "weevil," whatever that might be, in it.

Down the Channel they would steam, past the Longships, out into the "broad Atlantic" and Westward Ho! for St. Thomas. No need of a chart for him after all these years of dreaming. He knew his Mercator's Projection as some men know their Underground.

At St. Thomas there was a good chance of him catching the "Polly Anna," a three-masted schooner, over the "line" to Pernambuco, La Plata and the Horn—he hoped

for a genuine thrill there, and perhaps a whale or two—and so by Valparaiso—Vale of Paradise!—and up by the coast of Peru to Panama. Thence, fairest prize of all, Honolulu, Jewel of the Pacific, and the Islands of the Southern Cross. The turning-point of the journey home would be Yokohama, thence to Sumatra, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Athens, Messina, Rome. And so forth, as time and funds should allow.

The sunlit music of those names! No more than names for most men, toilers in the dark and sunless places of the earth. To think that millions should live and die, without so much as a glimpse . . . well, anyhow, they would soon be something more than mere names to him.

Thank God, he was still young enough to savour it all to the full! But it was only just in time. Each year the Call of the Spring received an answering message from his blood. But each year, he was beginning to realise, the Call of the Spring seemed to come later and die away the sooner. At fifty-three one could not expect many more of these visitations from the eager Spirit of Youth. But what would it matter, afterwards?

He pressed the wallet closer to his heart. "Just in time, my lad!" he said under his breath. "Just in time!"

"But I must be getting busy," he added, as he drew back from the parapet, and turned towards the City, humming his favourite refrain:

'So, Westward Ho! for Trinidad, And East——"

"Hullo!" he broke off suddenly, as he observed another dreamer leaning over the parapet some fifty yards away. "Another victim of the Wanderlust! A long way off his five hundred, I'm afraid—by the looks of him!"

Indeed, the drooping figure, with his hat drawn down over his brows and his face buried in his coat collar, looked the very picture of dejection. A smart young fellow, in other respects, however, and as the older man walked towards him he wondered what was the matter and what the boy's father thought about it all. Then, as he watched, the young man lifted his head, looked quickly this way and that, grasped the parapet with both hands, and had one leg flung over the top before he was seized by the arm and pulled strongly back to the pavement.

The two faced each other.

"Father!" cried the younger.
"My God! It's Lionel!"

The young man had been pale as ashes, but a deep and terrible flush began to overspread his cheeks. It reminded his father of the day, twenty years ago, when he had found him out in a petty act of theft.

and blue-ringed eyes that could not meet his own, horrified him. Something had gone dreadfully wrong.

But no, it was not Kitty. Yes, the children were all right.

Suddenly Lionel buried his face in his arms on the parapet.



"Instinctively his father laid a soothing hand on the bowed shoulder, but the young man shook it off. 'Don't touch me,' he cried passionately. 'I'm not fit for you to touch! Turn your back and let me end it. It's the only way.'"

Thank God, he had found him out at once, though it was painful at the time—for both. The impression of those tender years had never been effaced. The boy had been straight as a die ever since.

"What is it, Lionel? Tell me." Then, as his son hesitated, with averted face: "Come, tell your father, my boy," he coaxed. "Is it Kitty?"

It chanced he had not come across his son for some weeks. The haggard lines "It's all up, I'm done for!" he blurted out, with heaving shoulders. "If you must know, I've taken some money from the firm—embezzled it!"

Instinctively his father laid a soothing hand on the bowed shoulder, but the young man shook it off.

"Don't touch me," he cried passionately.
"I'm not fit for you to touch! Turn your back and let me end it. It's the only way.
I'm a thief! There's no way out!"

The older man stood motionless, silent, stunned. He was beginning to realise the truth. That the boy had suffered some great injury at another's hands, irremediable, shattering—that he could understand. It was a possibility in the life of any man. But that this misery and despair should be the fruit of his son's own misdoing—incredible! He blamed himself. He ought to have noticed something wrong long ago, but he had been so selfishly pre-occupied with his own affairs. Little things came back to him now, however, from the past, little things that he began to piece together. "Was it," he asked at length. "Was

it—gambling?"
Lionel nodded. "I have been a fool!"
he groaned. Then the desire for confession,
for sympathy, overcame him. Bit by bit
it came out, the old, old story. Expenses
at home—the little flutter that came off—
the big flutter that failed—the wild plunging
and mortgaging of every available security—
finally the "temporary loan" from the
office—and now the surprise audit, expected

to-morrow morning.

"To-morrow, you say?" interrupted his father sharply.

"Yes, to-morrow."

"Then no one knows anything about it

yet, only you and I?"

As Lionel admitted with a shrug that it was so, his father drew a deep breath of relief. Then there was still time, was his immediate thought. The thing might yet be as though it had never been.

Surely there must be some way out.
"Be still a minute, Lionel," he said, "and let me think."

He leaned over the parapet of the bridge by the side of his son, both men with unseeing eyes for the sun that still shone and the current that still rippled and glittered towards the sea.

A tug came puffing and blowing under the arch. The younger man drew back as the smoke blew up over the bridge, but his father's eyes lost their vacant look and dropped to the deck of the receding boat, as he sniffed the oil and the tar.

"She's taking those barges right out to sea. They'll empty them there," he said

inconsequently.

He moved his left arm a little. Something was pressing rather uncomfortably against his heart. Without thinking, he put his hand up to his pocket and fingered the bulging wallet within. As he did so his arm brushed the coat sleeve of the young man at his side.

"How much did you—take?" he whis-

pered hoarsely.

But he knew what the answer would be before it came.

"Five hundred pounds, father."

It was past noon now. The bridge was beginning to fill again. The clerks were pouring out into the sunlight, laughing and chattering for their luncheon hour.

"Hullo, Trinidad!" said one, as he

passed.



DREAMS.

HY have you made of me your Slave, O Dreams?

I beg you, dear my Loves, to let me be.

This is no trysting-time for you and me . . .

And yet you hold me captive, till it seems

As though I, bound like Merlin in the Cave

Of Vivien, yet fear for very ache

Of heart your sad-sweet bonds to try to break.

O Dreams, why have you made of me your slave?

ETHEL TALBOT.



WHAT TO DO WITHOUT?

Waiter (at very exclusive hotel, to lady who has asked for coffee without milk): Very sorry, madam, but we have no milk—will you have it without cream?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE TRESPASSERS. By A. M. Burrage.

HE met the girl in that part of the wood where it is always twilight, where the ground was littered with fir-cones, and stray gleams of sunlight lay here and there like clumps of bright flowers. She was not at all the sort of girl with whom you could enter into conversation without any pretext. Herbert knew this, having had some experience in these matters. He classified her as one of those who wouldn't permit themselves to be saved from drowning by men who had not previously been introduced to them.

But as he drew close to her he smiled, removed his gent's straw boater, and said:

"Excuse my telling you, won't you? But you're trespassing."

She coloured up at once.

"Oh, am I? I'm so awfully sorry."

"Oh, not at all. It's quite all right. But I thought you ought to know. If any of the keepers saw you they might turn you away. But you can tell 'em I said it was all right."

"Oh, thank you so much," she faltered, and blushed bewitchingly. "I'm a stranger down here—on a holiday. I knew some parts of the woods were public."

"You can go anywhere," he said handsomely. "Oh, thank you so much. I—I didn't even know you were at home, Sir Reginald."

"Oh, I'm very much at home, thank you," said Herbert airily.

"All the same," she said thoughtfully, "I think I'd better keep to the public part. But I don't know which is which."

"I can show you if you really wish it," he remarked, and she thanked him again.

So they wandered towards another part of the wood, where there were no more pine trees, and elms and oaks and silver birches grew. And on the way they met a nondescript old man whom Herbert, leaving the girl with a word of apology, hurried forward to greet. He asked the old man the time, but the old man, being deaf, assured him that he thought it would continue to be fine. Then Herbert hurried back to the girl and said briefly:

"Head keeper. Splendid—er—crop of young pheasants this year."

The girl sighed.

"I do envy some people," she said, and tried to remember the sort of thing which was said to landed proprietors by the characters in her favourite books. "Good hunting here, Sir Reginald?" she asked diffidently.

"Too much wire," said Herbert, who was also a reader. "Besides, we shooting men

Oh, just so. The height of my ambition is a good big garden, and I haven't even got that. I live at Anerley, you know."

"Anerley?" he repeated.

"You must have an awful lot of land, Sir Reginald."

"Oh, not very much," said Herbert modestly, reflecting that the lawn in the back garden at Croydon was only just big enough for Five-Ten. And even then it was his father's lawn and not his own. His companion was not the only holiday-maker in those parts.

"I heard you weren't often at home," pursued the girl. "I can't understand it, with such a

lovely place as this."

"Oh, one gets bored with it. I suppose I

Herbert coughed portentously.

"It all depends-" he began, and came to a A man in gaiters had stepped out from behind a tree and was bearing down on them, and Herbert was instantly aware that this was a real keeper.

"Don't you know that this here's private?" demanded the keeper not too courteously. "Because it's time you did. You be off sharp, and take your young lady with you. It's as much as my place is worth to have the young birds disturbed."

Herbert murmured that he was sorry, and they covered the next hundred yards in silence.

"I told you that you were trespassing," he said at last.



THE MISSING LINK.

EXASPERATED PORTER (after fruitless search): Haven't you got your luggage marked, sir? PASSENGER: Oh, yes, I have it stamped with one of those infallible monomarks, only I just forget what mine is.

ought to be on the Riviera in August, but there's so much to attend to. What with land-taxes and-

"I know. I've often said that the aristocracy don't have half such a good time as some people think. All the same, you wouldn't like to have to live in Anerley."

"I don't know," said Herbert, reflecting that Croydon wasn't so far off.

"I've often wondered," murmured the girl ingenuously, "how girls who aren't used to big houses get on when they marry wealthy peers and baronets. Business girls and actresses, I mean; perfect ladies, mind you, but not used to money and position. Does it take them long to get used to it, Sir Reginald?"

The girl was looking distinctly huffy.

"But I thought you were Sir Reginald," she said in a tone which was markedly lacking in cordiality.

"I didn't say so. I said you were trespassing, and so you were. And so was I, for that matter."

The girl merely sniffed.

"Matter of fact," he continued, "I'm down here on a holiday too. And I live at Croydon. Don't suppose you'd like Sir Reginald if you met him. I shouldn't think he's half so affable as I am. Had tea yet?"

The girl vouchsafed no answer. She looked as if she had neuralgia and had just been reading

the death of Little Nell.

"Never mind," said the young man conciliatingly, "isn't it a good job?"

"Isn't what a good job?" she asked suspici-

ously.

"That Croydon's so close to Anerley," said Herbert, taking her arm.



WEATHER-BEATEN.

I've often wondered just exactly what it is That hypnotises folk to talk of weather, Compelling them to say how cold or hot it is, When thrown, by chance or circumstance, together. My heart I daren't unburden—far too full it is
For words, but let me sound this friendly warning—
Exactly like a red rag to a bull it is
To say to me, in greeting, "Nasty morning!"

R. N. E. Higginbotham.



"George," said his wife, "I don't think all the years we've been married you have ever said a single unkind word to me."

"I hope not, my dear," replied George. "I'm

sure I've never meant to."

"Ah, that's the question," she replied. "I



THE POINT OF VIEW.

ROMANTIC YOUNG THING (with visions of messages from shipwrecked mariners): Oh, look, there's a bottle! Perhaps there's something in it.

PROSAIC BOATMAN: 'Ardly likely, miss, nobody ever throws 'em away with anything left in 'em nowadays!

It seems to me 'tis more than likely that it is Because these platitudes we're prone to utter The guests at social functions think how flat it is, Tho' plied with tea and cake and bread and butter.

It strikes me, now and then, how meet and fit it is To introduce a little candid speaking—
To tell each other how devoid of wit it is Our small-talk thus inanely to be eking.
But when I try this method, I regret it is Received in silence horrified and frozen,
As tho' all topics save how fine or wet it is Were, if not quite taboo, at least ill-chosen.

So, now that I have come to learn how rash it is, No more I flout Society's convention; But if, at times, my teeth you see me gnash, it is Because the weather, thoughtlessly, you mention was just wondering whether you really have a beautiful temper or whether it's been just want of courage."



An old man from the country was on his first visit to a garrison town where he had his first glimpse of military life. His attention was caught by the spectacle of two sentries passing and repassing each other in silence. He watched them intently for several minutes, then, yielding to a kindly instinct, stepped up to them as they met once more and said, "Come, my boys, why don't you two make up and be friends?"

THE TEST. By Kenneth M. Aedy.

HE made a sad figure as he sat there, alone and neglected, amidst all that bustle and clatter. Things had always been like this, and now that the great idea had come to him he knew that he would have to arouse his long-subdued manliness if he was to carry it through.

He saw that if he could only carry out this one act, so simple, yet requiring so much strength of will, he would at one stroke regain that respect which he knew was due to him. The hunger that was within him, and had been with him for so long, would be allayed and his strength to face his tasks renewed.

to see it through? His lips were dry and his face tinged crimson with the struggle that was going on within him.

Yes, was he not a man? What had he to fear? Drawing himself up, he raised his hand and brought it down squarely upon the teashop bell on the table before him.



The estate of a chimney-sweep who died not long ago was valued at more than three thousand pounds, but this was the result of careful saving and judicious investment, and had nothing to do with "the Calcutta Sweep."



AN ENVIABLE STATE.

LITTLE JOAN (struck with her mother's Eton crop): Nurse, when shall I be able to leave off hair, like Mummie?

Yet still he sat there, rigid and afraid, striving all the time to force himself to make that one move that was to mean so much to him. He saw well what the immediate effect would be—how all the stir and hurry of that place would cease, how all eyes would be turned upon him, some filled with scorn, others with admiration. Dare he face this awful moment?

He knew that having once done it he must not then lose his courage, he must see the thing through; and the awful thought of failing at this point held him back.

Still, he felt that courage was coming to him, that the spirit of his youth was rising in him again, and that his manliness was asserting itself.

He squared his shoulders. Would he be able

An American doctor declares that criminal tendencies can be cured by a diet of fruit. We may soon hear of prisoners being sentenced to two bananas without the option.



The directors of a Continental Zoo are proud of a lion in their collection which has never roared in its life; but that's nothing—we ourselves have a very ancient canary which has never uttered a note.



Brown: Where are you going next summer?
Jones: Same place, only by rail. I want to see the scenery.

"HEADS OR TAILS." By Cynthia Cornwallis.

"THEY tell me," said Doris in a worried tone, "that I must be very careful not to get the moth in my tail."

There was a profound silence.

Henry removed his pipe from his mouth, and

"Quite," agreed Edward.

"You see," went on Doris, "it is really rather beautiful, although I say it myself."

"You must do something about it of course, dear," assented Cynthia. "No other could ever be the same."

"No," sighed Doris, "one's own is part of



WIT WILL OUT.

FOREMAN (to workman trying to hang paper on ceiling): Nah then! Wot's the idea, licking off the paste?

put it back again twice before he cleared his throat and said apologetically: "I can only suggest a lump of camphor in your trousers pocket."

"Don't be absurd!" retorted Cynthia: "she doesn't keep it in her trousers pocket. At least, I mean she wouldn't if she had, but as she hasn't, she can't anyhow."

oneself, of course. I could never bring myself to wear anyone else's."

"It would certainly be awkward," agreed Henry.

"Some people brush and comb theirs every day," remarked Cynthia.

"Oh, that's carrying things too far!" objected Doris, "I couldn't be bothered."

"I should think it was only while it was a novelty," returned Cynthia.

"But all the same, it's rather fascinating,

you know."

"A novelty?" queried Henry, looking dazed. Doris continued to gaze in the fire.

"After all," she said rather wistfully, "one feels one has to brush and comb something. I never thought of moth; did you?"

"Not for a moment," answered Cynthia.

"They don't in the ordinary way."

"Don't what?" cried Edward in exasperation. "Who don't what?"

"They lay eggs," replied Doris seriously; "and the grubs eat the hair and it comes out."

"And the worst of it is," said Cynthia, "that camphor or moth ball makes one smell so."

Edward wrinkled his brow.

"I can't pretend that I know what I'm talking about," he ventured mildly; "but" isn't red pepper---?"

Doris shrieked in horror.

"Why, my partners would sneeze all

night," she expostulated.
"Partners?" muttered Henry. "Please enlighten me, Doris," he went on sternly:

"am I to understand that you are in danger of going tald, or . . ."

"Not me personally," interrupted his wife; "only

my tail."
"Sheep-dip!" exclaimed Edward suddenly.

"What for?" asked Doris in astonishment.

"Well, it's only an idea, of course," said Edward; "but if you sat in a bath of sheep-dip . . ."

"Sat in a bath of sheepdip!" repeated Cynthia in an appalled voice. "What are you talking about?"

"I don't know," replied Edward truthfully.

"I'm going Doris rose. to see if it's all right," she said; "this conversation has made me nervous."

"Me, too!" ejaculated Henry in a feeling tone. "I can almost feel one sprouting!"

His wife returned with a bundle of tissuepaper tied sentimentally with blue ribbon.

She opened it and shook out a loose plait of shining russet hair.

She put up her hand and stroked the back of her head caressingly.

"Wasn't I a fool?" she said.



An art critic complains that several pieces of sculpture in London are placed where they cannot be seen. Perhaps it is all for the best.

Young Lady (from footboard of a bus where she has secured a place by sheer "push," to her mother who is recoiling helplessly from the surging crowd on the pavement): Come on, Mummie! It's no earthly use your trying to be a lady!



TEACHER (speaking of another tropical land): The country is about the same size as Siam. INATTENTIVE PUPIL (suddenly "panicky" as



A GOOD OMEN.

"You know that little green hat I bought you last week, well, I saw cook wearing it to-day."
"Good! Then she probably intends to stay with us."

he sees his "turn" coming, in frenzied whisper to neighbour): Wot did she say was the size?

OBLIGING NEIGHBOUR: Same as she is.



Traveller (inspecting astonishingly "varied" menu in a remote Highland inn): Do you mean to say, waiter, that I can choose any of these?

WAITER: You can choose what you like, sir, but what you'll get is ham and eggs.

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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

MRS. PERKINS AND THE FLOWER SHOW.

"We've got a societry down our way for elevating the working-classes," said Mrs. Perkins, "and the last bit of elevating they did was to get up a flower show. The idea at the back of their 'eads was that we should all pay threepence for a plant in its infant stages and nurture it up for months, and produce it all a blowing and a-growing at the show. Perkins said with beer at its present price it was a waste of money. They asked me if I'd 'ave a Zonal Pelargonium (copied off the ticket). It sounded very 'igh clarse, but I'm blest if it didn't turn out to be

an ordinary geranium, and not much of it at that. But it got on as well as could be expected considering that Perkins knocked it over three times and the cat got it once.

"'Aving me living to get I couldn't afford to spend hours a day 'anging over a flower-pot like some of them did. There was the party over the way, fer instance, she made a fair 'obby of it. She was watching and watering her geranium all the blessed day and 'arf the night. She redorchred the pot and took it out for walks and was always dusting the leaves with her pocket 'anker-

"The night before the show she stood it out on the window-ledge for a final airing and somebody pinched it and left one that 'ad gone to seed in its place

"There was a special clarse for 'Table Decorations,' and some of them 'ad funny ideas about that.

"A lady friend of mine sent in three nastur-

shuns and a bit of parsley in a marmalade-pot, and Mrs. 'Opkins rose to the occasion with two dandelions and a sprig of mint in a penny inkbottle.

"No, I didn't get a prize. My Zonal what's-'is-name didn't come out very strong in the blooming line, so at the last minute I took the flowers out of my best 'at and glued them on to the thing. It looked a fair treat, but they went and disqualified me. And that's all the elevating I got out of the show."

R. H. Roberts.



"I wonder who invented wireless?" asked Bobby. It was a deep question for Willie to answer, but he is the kind of boy who believes in taking a shot at anything. He doesn't believe in ever admitting that he is stumped, so he replied promptly: "I don't remember his name exactly, but it was some fellow who had to come in early."



FOOTPRINTS, said to have been made by an animal twenty-five million years ago, were recently discovered in Colorado. It must have



VERY OBLIGING.

DEALER (bargaining for cow): How much milk does she give?

FARMER (warily): I don't rightly know, but she be awfully good-natured, and she'll give all she can!

been a fascinating creature to have made such a lasting impression.



A Belgrade message says that there is a young man living in Dalmatia who thinks he is a racehorse. The horse we drew in a recent sweepstake appears to have been labouring under a similar delusion.

A SCIENTIST points out that we all have sulphur in our bodies, some more than others. Those who have most, of course, make the best matches.



Rub a damp cloth lightly over the Monkey Brand tablet and at once you have a perfect supply of smooth, even-cleaning power. It cleans and brightens fine surfaces without scratching them . . . and there's no waste anywhere.

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THE hours you spend in sleep, whether a full night of peaceful rest or the few that remain after dancing till the morning, are meant to bring you beauty. So they will if you give Nature a chance to overcome the dust-laden air of our modern life. Nature meant your skin to be in a constant state of flux, the top skin gradually disappearing as it became old and worn and being replaced by the young, new skin that has been growing underneath. Modern conditions interfere with Nature's process. The minute particles of the old skin remain to clog the pores and choke the new, tender skin.

Restore Nature's balance by gently massaging your face, neck and arms with a little pure Mercolized Wax before you go to bed. Then, while you sleep, the Mercolized Wax will be slowly, imperceptibly dissolving away the tiny particles of the old, dried-up skin and allowing the delicate new skin underneath to grow as Nature meant it to. You will find yourself in the morning with a complexion as clear and soft as a baby's.

Just try this wonderful way to beauty to-night. You will be delighted with the difference in the morning. Nothing else can do the skin so much good for nothing but Mercolized Wax acts in such a natural way. Go to any chemist and ask for Pure

Mercolized Wax

DOES NOT contain Mercury or anything injurious to the complexion, and is guaranteed not to encourage the growth of hair. Two sizes only—2/- and 3/6.

DEARBORN (1923) LTD., 37 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

A MODEST REQUEST.

Dearest Jenny, if you love me,
(Which I do not doubt, my dear)
Will you grant a simple favour
Just to make the matter clear?

For my love would grow much stronger
If, in truth, you let me know

That you'll never, any longer,

Say: "Right-HO!"

Terms like this are doubtless handy,
Some I use from day to day,
Suited to express a meaning
In a neat and novel way;
But as this one, out of many,
Riles me more than I can tell,
Can't you say, instead, dear Jenny,
"Very well"?

John Lea.

ROBINSON: What are you doing to-morrow evening?

JENKINS: I dunno. My wife hasn't told me yet.

BBB

SMITH: You say a clay pipe is a great time-saver. How is that?

Pat: Faith, whin ye drop it ye don't have to bother pickin' it up.

888

REGGIE: Isn't this a wonderful floor for dancing?

ETHEL (after being stepped on all evening): Then why don't you use it?



THE FELLOWSHIP OF SPORT.

Urchin (to angler): 'Ave you caught anything, sir?
Angler (grumpily): No!
Urchin (after a long pause): Would you like one of these, sir?

"Is the bathing unsafe here?"

"Oh, no, sir! Perfectly safe."

"Ah! that's a pity; I was trying to find an excuse for not going in."

888

An American complains that he can't get hot water with meals in European hotels. But isn't hotel tea a very good imitation?

898

An expert claims that he can forecast the weather for fifty days ahead. Why meet trouble half-way?

Actor: I'm a comedian.

PLAYGOER: Do you believe in gags?

ACTOR: Of course!

PLAYGOER: Why don't you wear one, then?

888

NOTED BORE: Are you going my way? NEIGHBOUR: Why, no; that is, which way are you going?

888

A FASTING man has received five hundred offers of marriage. These would-be wives evidently believe that he would be easy to feed.



Little Nippers like Skippers

The dainty little fish in the purest olive oil.

They suit them to a Tea.



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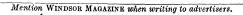
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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

GENIAL GEORGE. By Jessie Pope.

GENIAL GEORGE was the handy man on our estate, which consisted of a couple of acres of gorse and heather, with a peaty pool thrown in as a makeweight-quite useless for cultivation, but pretty as a picture. Still we did hope to make a bit on our rabbit warren, and showed quite a good turnover-on paper.

We soon found that our rabbits were being freely poached by the friendly and interested villagers. Of course this was annoying to us, and absolutely infuriated George, who was craving to put up his "handy" fists the moment

he could "catch 'em at it."

"'What you got in that basket, mate?' says I.

"' 'That's my business,' says 'e.

"'I'm here to make it mine,' says I.

"' Well, if you must know,' says 'e, 'it's the wife's washing.'

"'Seeing's believing, says I. 'Open the lid!'

"' That I won't, says 'e.

"'Then put up your fists,' says I, an' 'e did. We fought for nigh twenty minutes. 'E was game, but 'e 'adn't got no science, 'an after a bit 'e caved in. I'd taken some too, but not 'alf wat 'e 'ad. It was a rare good scrap, an' I wouldn't 'ave missed it, that I wouldn't.' "'



TOO BAD!

HE: I've finished with your friend; she insulted me.

SHE: How? HE: She asked me if I danced. SHE: What's insulting about that?

HE: I was dancing with her when she asked me!

One Saturday, at nightfall, he started off to do some shopping and visit his aunt in the neighbouring town. He looked so spruce in his best suit and new bowler, that when he returned in less than half-an-hour, hat-brim broken, collar torn, and one eye fast closing, we exclaimed in chorus, "Oh, George! Have you been fighting?"

He grinned and nodded, and his good eye was

genial as ever as he answered:

"I 'ave that—an' I reckon 'e won't go to church to-morrow. As I was walking across to the station, I see a big lout just coming away from our fence with a basket on his arm.

- "Good for you, George," we cried. are the rabbits?"
- "Oh-well," he replied, with a genial grin, "it was the washing in the basket."

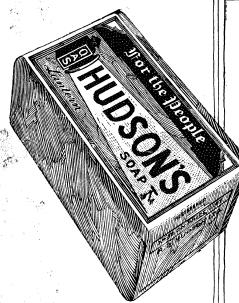


A REMARKABLE MAN.

He stood alone, aloof, he was unique, Of him with bated breath his friends would speak: "He is the oddest man we've ever met-He has not done a crossword puzzle yet!" Leslie M. Oyler.







IN PACKETS EVERYWHERE why have women

such a hatred of wasting time—especially upon household duties? Surely because the modern woman has more use for her leisure hours—because a whole new range of interests and enjoyments has opened up for her of late. In household washing, for instance, she will prefer a cleansing material that leaves her

more time

and more energy to spare at the end of the day. Hudson's Soap is a great time-saver. It is more than that. It cleans quickest and it cleans best. All over the house it is invaluable. A little in the washing-up water not only does the job quickly but gives you shining cutlery and china of which you can be proud. The housewife who uses Hudson's is happy in her working hours as well as in the extra time she gets

to spare



Hudsons for washing up & cleaning down soap

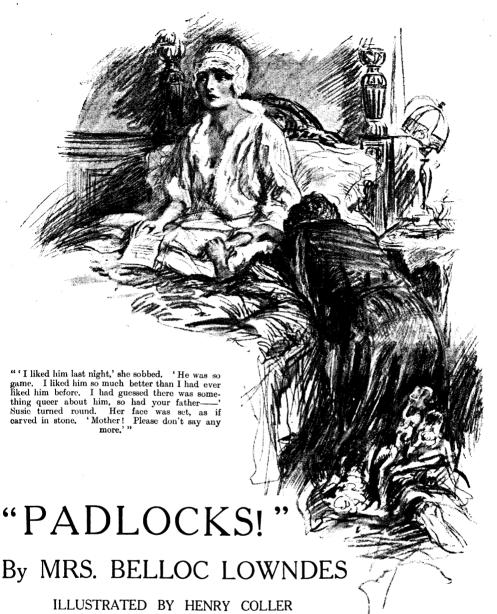
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Q.,

(Spring)



EVENING'S WESTERN FLAME. From a photograph by Judges', Limited, Hastings.



OTHER! I've forgotten a most important chap. Jake d'Egre-

mont, 200 Jermyn Street. Do

put him down!'

"What an odd name. Do I know him, Robin?"

"He came to lunch one day—just before we left town. But I think you were out——"Lord Ardvilly hesitated, just a perceptible moment, and the Duchess, who was very quick, noticed that hesitation.

"He's more a friend of Susie's than of

mine," he observed.

"I wish I were better acquainted with some of your friends, and your sister's friends, darling boy," she said wistfully.

She and her eldest son were making out a list of guests, young and old, for their first September house-party.

"Of the five young men whose names I've just put down I only know one to speak to," she went on.

"Life in London is such a rush," he said penitently. "Also, you're so awfully busy, mother."

"Never too busy to care very much

about anything that concerns you and your sister, my dear. But now to go back to this friend of Susie's. Is he tall, dark, cleanshaven, with very bright blue eyes?"

"Yes, that describes him exactly! Then

you have seen him, mother?"

"If it's the man I mean he was at the Kent House ball, and I noticed that he danced a good many times with your sister."

The Duchess was remembering, with a slight feeling of retrospective discomfort, the admiring, caressing look that a tall dark man, whose name she now knew to be d'Egremont, had cast on her lovely little débutante daughter. The two had been sitting out on a balcony, far from the ballroom, and they had remained unaware both of her approach and of her retreat.

"Now I've got down nine of your and Susie's friends; Mr. Davenant for me;

and-----''

"- 'the Marchioness' for father?" her

son slyly ended the sentence.

The Duchess smiled. The Duke was a man of strong prejudices, and he very much disliked his cousin by marriage, Lady St. Yves, who, according to malicious gossip, was fond of describing herself as "the Marchioness."

"Your father will be here only for the Monday of our party. I think he ought to put up with having her once next him at

dinner!"

"I wish she wasn't coming," grumbled the young man, "she's so purse-proud and pompous."

"Poor Gertie! I heard someone say the other day that she was like a poultice gone

cold."

"Mother—how perfect! I must tell that

"No, indeed—you mustn't tell anybody that, dear boy! Surely you don't repeat the little things I tell you?"

She looked up into his face with a half-laughing, half-frightened look. "Padlocks!"

she cried.

As he bent down and kissed her, "Pad-

locks, of course," he murmured.

And then he went on: "I know Gertie's a good sort really. But 'a poultice gone cold'! I call that a stroke of genius!"

He was leaving the charming flower-filled old-fashioned sitting-room which was still called her Grace's boudoir, when suddenly he turned round.

"Padlocks, too, about Susie and d'Egremont, eh, mother? Susie would be awfully

cross if she knew I had told you he was a 'special' of hers."

'Why should she be?"

"She shouldn't be, but Susie's like that,

you know."

Susie's mother did know that Susie was "like that," and she sighed a rather sad sigh as she began writing her notes of invitation. The girl, now just over eighteen, was reserved and sensitive; secretive, too, about trifles of no importance. Now and again she treated the Duchess more like an unloved governess than as an almost over-loving, over-tender mother.

II.

"When I look at some of those rouged, powdered, lip-sticked young things, so different from what I used to be, it makes me feel so ancient—such a 'has been,' "observed the Duchess, in a melancholy tone, as she rubbed her soft, unlined, unpowdered cheek on her husband's sleeve.

The two were standing in what was called the Musicians' Gallery. It was a queer dark little recess with one side opening on to the great hall, on whose floor, some forty feet below, were now dancing some ten to twelve couples.

"You always talk as if you were old. If you're old, what am I?" observed the

Duke.

For a moment his wife made no answer to that remark. She was picking out her own children among the dancers in the great hall below. Yes, with one exception, there they all were, even to the youngest of them who was still, to her own indignation, for she was eight years old, called Lady Baby. She had been allowed to stay up because the joyous party was breaking up very early the day after to-morrow. . . .

The Duchess's heart flew to the one child who was not there, her eldest daughter, Lady Lettice Arbuthnot, who had married last year, and lived far away in the North

of England.

"You forget, James, that we'll be grandparents soon, please God," she said softly.

"I hate remembering a fact which you keep reminding me of with what I call unnatural joy," he grunted.

And then all at once he asked, in quite a different tone, "Who's that dark chap dancing with Susie? No one's taken the trouble to introduce him to me."

"His name is d'Egremont, and he's been the Admirable Crichton of the party," she replied lightly. "He does everything well —tennis, golf, even rackets. He's a first-rate horseman, too; you should have seen him two days ago, in the riding school!"

"I always distrust those sort of do-all-things-well chaps," growled the Duke. "There's something funny about your new friend. I thought so at dinner, to-night."

"If you'd honoured my party with a little more of your company, he'd be your

friend too."

"If I'd known 'the Marchioness' was going to give you the slip, I'd have come

days ago," he said penitently.

"We needn't ask her again for ever so long," said the Duchess cheerfully. "I'm always nervous lest any of her wonderful jewels should disappear while she's on a visit here. They're always dropping off her, and then there's such a fearful fuss till they've been found again. D'you remember the emerald earring?"

"That was found, after she left, in the pin-box where she'd put it? Of course I

do! '

"I wish you weren't going away tomorrow," she murmured, slipping her hand through his arm.

"I only like being here when we're alone—you and I and the bed-post," he observed.

"And the children—?"

"I can do with a little of their company—but not with that of their friends!"

"I'm just as bored as you are by the new-young!" she exclaimed. "But it's one's duty to be kind, so now I'm going downstairs."

"Kindness always brings its own punishment," he observed, as he bent down and kissed her.

"I don't ask you to be kind-"

But he followed her, as she knew he would.

As the host and hostess entered the great hall the dancers began streaming out on to the moonlit lawn; it was an early September night, warm, yet with all the summer heat gone.

The Duchess stopped to say a kindly word to the four members of the local string band, and then exclaiming, "You'll find Mr. Davenant in the cedar drawing-room, James; I'm just going out for a minute to give Susie my shawl," she went across to the threshold of the door now open on to the star-lit night.

At first she saw nothing; then, gradually, shadowy forms emerged. She began to count them. Yes, they were all there, less two—she missed her daughter's slender figure, and that of one of the young men.

She took a step forward, on to the grass, and then suddenly she heard, uttered in low, ardent tones, the words: "You don't know what your friendship means to me, Susie. But it wouldn't be fair to ask you to wait—till I've made good!"

And then the fresh young voice whose every inflexion Susie's mother knew, and had known and marked, from the speaker's babyhood, exclaimed: "Of course it would be fair—if I think so! As to making good—d'you really believe it would take as long as you think it would, Jake?"

The two who were exchanging these poignant, intimate words of—was it only friendship?—were evidently sitting or standing on the other side of one of the stone buttresses which jutted out between each of the long windows of the great hall.

To listen to what she was not meant to hear was no part of the Duchess's code, so quickly walking towards the shadowy groups sauntering about on the lawn beyond—that amount of deceit she allowed herself to practise—she called out, "Susie! Where are you, my dear? I've brought you out a shawl——"

There was a pause; then she heard a breathless voice from behind her crying, "I'm here, mother!"

She turned quickly round, glad of the darkness, to see the two figures which had been so securely hidden, as they doubtless thought, from censoring ears, as well as eyes, hastening towards her.

"Mr. d'Egremont has been telling me all about some interesting work he is going to do abroad."

Lady Susie uttered the commonplace words in a nervous, shaken voice. And, "I'm one of those people, Duchess, who've always been rolling stones," chimed in the deep vibrant tones of which his elder listener had early realised the caressing, seductive quality.

"I've heard of a very good job in South America," he went on, "so I shall be off next month. Lady Susie has been kind enough to suggest that I may perhaps come back for a week-end a little later on, before I say good-bye for what I know will be a long time to all my friends?"

"I'm glad you'll be able to find time for

us again, Mr. d'Egremont."

The Duchess was glad, so very, very glad, that he was going away, and for a long time, that her voice was even kinder than usual.

Little Lady Susie moved across to her

mother's side and, miracle of miracles, took hold of her mother's hand.

"Everyone has been so awfully good to me."

There was a touch of sincere emotion

father was a page of Marie Antoinette. Jake was 'Jacques' of course---"

Insensibly the Duchess's heart softened. The foreign strain perhaps accounted for something about this man which she did



"I'm descended from one of the Great Revolution emigrés. My great-great-grandnot like—the "something" which had made the Duke feel that this attractive

guest was a thought unlike other people.

Through the windows came strains of jazz music, and the dancers began streaming

Not for the first time during the last few days the mother told herself that her girl's new friend was much older than



back through the open door. With a sigh the Duchess watched the gay procession; then she, too, went back into the great hall.

Closely clasped to Jake d'Egremont's breast Lady Susie was moving slowly, slowly round, an absorbed, dreaming expression on her flower-like face.

the other young men there. His tanned, hatchet-shaped face bore traces of hard living. But his blue eyes were very bright; and when he looked down at his partner they became filled with an abject look of adoration which repelled the Duchess, and made her long to snatch her child from his powerful, possessive arms.

TIT.

The next afternoon Mr. Davenant, most trusted, if not most popular, of Home Secretaries, stood with the Duchess on the terrace outside the cedar drawing-room. In a few minutes from now he was due to leave the castle.

"I wish," he exclaimed, "that we had an English Watteau painting now!"

He was gazing down into a glade starred with lithe, moving figures. The young men were in flannels, and the girls clad in brightly coloured cotton frocks, for it was still very hot.

"Though I have hosts of friends, I am, as I think you know, Duchess, a lonely man, and it's done me good "—his eyes twinkled, but there was genuine emotion in his resonant voice—" to see a real, old-fashioned English home!"

"I wish you'd stay till to-morrow," she said impulsively. "Why not leave with the young people? The Duke had to go up this morning, but surely you could stay till to-morrow?"

He looked at her, amused that she could think that her dear busy-idle Duke had had to be in London to-day, but that he, who bore so heavy a burden of public care, could stay on.

"Alas, would that I could! It's been such a delight meeting all these golden lads

and girls----'

The Duchess exclaimed, "I'm glad you've enjoyed my baby party! I suppose it's because I'm growing old at last, but I don't feel as much in touch with the young folk as I ought to do. Now take the five young men down there, I mean my Robin's friends—"

The man by her side made a slight movement; it was as if he was suddenly impelled to listen with increased attention.

"— Four of them I never met before my boy suggested I should ask them here for our tennis week! I'm actually glad we're slowly coming back to chaperons."

"I agree," he observed, with quick

decision.

"One feels it,"—instinctively she lowered her voice,—" because of the girls, Mr. Davenant! Young men must take their chance. But believe me," she smiled a very charming smile, "when I say that even the naughtiest of our modern girls are such innocent creatures—really. However knowing they may think they are, what do they, what can they know of life? Of the horrible gins

and pitfalls which lie concealed in the path of the reckless, and even of the simply foolish?"

"You are speaking more truly than you know, Duchess."

He turned and faced her squarely. "I'm tempted," he said, with a half-doubting smile, "to tell you a secret!"

"A secret?" He saw her eyes sparkle, as she added, "Though I'm said to be a chatterbox, I'm very discreet! You and I are old enough friends for you to know that." And this was true. The Duchess was discreet.

"It isn't a pleasant secret." The smile left Mr. Davenant's face. And then he exclaimed, "Forgive me! I think I'd better not tell you——"

She put out her hand, and laid it for a moment on his arm.

"Has your secret anything to do with any of us?" she asked, in a changed voice. "If it's anything disagreeable, I'd rather learn it from you, my friend, than from anybody else."

He saw a look of real apprehension come over her face. So, while cursing himself for a babbler, he told himself that having gone so far he must go the whole way. Fortunately, what he was about to reveal did not concern this dear delightful woman in any real sense at all.

"It has absolutely nothing to do with you, or with anybody you care for," he said reassuringly. "But it's the sort of thing that might conceivably find its way into one of those stupid, gossip columns, by which I'm told certain people we know make their living."

"Yes?" she said, breathing more easily. "What is it?"

"I hardly know where to begin!" he exclaimed. "But, well—may I start by saying that you've been fortunate in not having Lady St. Yves among your guests this week!"

His hostess's face showed her bewilderment. "Then your secret has got to do with 'the Marchioness.' Is she going to be married again?"

"No, that's not my secret-"

And then, after a moment's hesitation, he went on: "I went out for a walk in the town by myself yesterday. And whom should I see, coming out of what I believe is called the River Hotel, but a man named Cracknell, who is a noted officer in the C.I.D."

"C.I.D.?" repeated the Duchess un-

certainly. "What does that stand for?"

"I see you're no reader of detective yarns," he smiled. "But any of your children could, I'm sure, tell you that C.I.D. stands for our Criminal Investigation Department. Well, he, Cracknell and I, went for a walk together, along a raised field-path through those beautiful water meadows which I suppose remain very much as they were in Turner's time, and then Cracknell revealed why he was here, in your peaceful little town."

"Yes---?"

"You said just now that four of the five young men among your guests are practically strangers to you?"

It was on the tip of her tongue to say, "Well, that was an exaggeration, for I know all about three of them, though I'd never actually met them."

But, eager to hear what he had to tell, she remained silent.

"One of your visitors—I know I may trust you not to try and find out which one —is a famous international——" The Home Secretary's lips formed the word "criminal," but hurriedly he substituted the milder term, "crook."

"Is that really true, Mr. Davenant?"

The face whose habitual serenity had always been, to the man standing by her, the Duchess's greatest charm, became extraordinarily discomposed. She looked agitated and alarmed.

"I oughtn't to have told you!" he exclaimed penitently.

She made a great effort over herself; she even smiled. "On the contrary—I shall always be grateful that you told me. It will be a lesson to me to be more careful."

"A hostess can hardly be too careful nowadays," he observed, in a quiet, kindly tone. "But Cracknell informed me the young man in question moves in very good society, for all that he is—what he is. It is supposed that he found out Lady St. Yves was to be among your guests, and—"

"— that he really came here, hoping to steal some of her famous jewels," she ended the sentence for him.

To his surprise he saw that the idea actually amused the Duchess; she no longer looked as she had done just now—alarmed, and very much shocked.

"D'you know much about him?" she

asked slowly.

"Yes and no. He was, it seems, head of the gang concerned with the big robbery which took place nearly a year ago from one of the royal palaces in Spain. Then he utterly disappeared. The continental police were convinced that he had gone to South America. He was born in Brazil, his family being of "—he hesitated—" very good Continental extraction, and, oddly enough, well-to-do and respectable."

"A robbery in Spain? I had not heard of that," she murmured, remembering a word uttered last night by her little Susie's

friend.

"About ten days ago," went on Mr. Davenant, "a woman who is in love with him gave him away to the C.I.D. She had become violently jealous, she admitted, of the kind of life he has been leading the last few months—I mean the life of a popular man about town in what is absurdly called 'the smart set.'"

"I know what you mean," she murmured.

"I mean the set that welcomes anybody -anybody, mark you, Duchess-who has money to burn. It was hoped to catch this daring chap red-handed here. for all our sakes I am exceedingly glad that the young gentleman in question has spent perforce an idle week, resting on his oars. Even before I pointed it out to Cracknell, he realised the importance of not allowing it to be known that such a man had stayed at the castle as your guest. If the fact that I was with you at the same time came out, it would make me look rather absurd, and would make a splendid story for the newspapers—the sort of story that one naturally prefers should published." remain

"Yes, indeed!" she exclaimed.

"Besides, I've always followed in life the good, old-fashioned rule of letting a man go and be hanged elsewhere," he said thoughtfully.

"But what will happen after he leaves here?" she asked, in a low, troubled

tone.

Mr. Davenant looked surprised. "Can you ask? As soon as he has got well away he will, of course, be arrested. There is more than one most serious extradition charge against him."

"I suppose the poor man has no sus-

picion—? " she began.

He looked at her, amused. "He's less than no suspicion! He regards himself as absolutely safe, especially here. The woman who betrayed him declares that he's madly in love, really in love, with some society girl. But that's all nonsense of course. An important part of that sort of chap's stock-

in-trade is being able to make love charm-

ingly---"

The Duchess winced inwardly, but all she said was: "Now I wonder which of our young men has been making love? Not one, so far as I've been able to see. I haven't noticed anything of the kind—have you, Mr. Davenant?"

She threw him a gentle, inquiring look. He was surprised by the question. That wasn't playing quite fair. He had thought that his dear Duchess always played fair, and he felt a little disappointed.

He shook his head and smiled. "I expect our friend is having a holiday from lovemaking, as well as from everything else," he answered lightly.

A man-servant came out on the terrace. "Your car is at the door, sir."

His hostess accompanied her friend to the great door, where her eldest boy ought to have been waiting to see off their distinguished guest. She had reminded him of the time. But Lord Ardvilly had forgotten, as young people are apt to forget nowadays the courtesies which yet mean so much in life.

As Mr. Davenant pressed her hand he murmured, "I hope I've been wise in telling you that curious secret, Duchess?"

She said at once, "Not only wise, but kind."

"And of course you'll never give me away?"

She looked a little hurt. "Padlocks!" she cried.

It was a quaint, old-fashioned expression, which she had learnt and adopted as her own from the stern old dame who had been the Duke's grandmother.

As he stepped up into his motor the Home Secretary wondered if the Duchess would guess, between now and to-morrow morning, which of her children's friends was a dangerous criminal. He thought not, and he hoped not.

Though he was a shrewd man of the world he would have been surprised indeed to learn that not for one moment had her doomed guest's identity been in doubt.

IV.

That same evening Jake d'Egremont was standing before the high mantelpiece of the charming bedroom where he had spent some exultant, delicious and absolutely happy hours during the last week.

To fall from the sublime to the commonplace, a final touch of perfection had been afforded by the fact that he had been valeted during this wonderful visit by Lord Ardvilly's own man.

D'Egremont more than once in his life had had occasion to play the part of a gentleman's gentleman, both on the Continent and in America. Each time he had elected to personate an English valet. During the last few days he had told himself that were it ever to be his fate to play that rôle again he would act it all the better for having known the quaintly-named Nettle, to whom he intended to present, to-morrow morning, a truly princely tip.

But never more, so he had determined, would be masquerade as either prince or valet—he had filled both parts with distinc-The time had now come for him to play a very different rôle—that of prodigal son. He had made to-day a partial confession to the most adorable, as well as the truest, girl, in the whole world. given him her word of honour that she would treat his confidences as to certain wild youthful acts of folly as sacred. Earnestly she had begged him to turn over an entirely new leaf. And, as if in exchange for his fervent promise, she had admitted that, yes, he had guessed truly, she was still quite heart-free, and now at eighteen, old enough to know that a sensible girl is in no hurry to marry till she is-well?-say one-andtwenty. That would be in three years from now—time enough for a clever man to carve out an entirely new, and while brilliant, yet absolutely respectable, career for himself.

In a sense Lady Susie had said very little and yet the little, as he well knew, implied so much!

While dressing for dinner on this, his last, evening at the castle, he stopped now and again, and lived again that last delicious hour with her who called herself his friend, but who surely knew, deep in her heart, that they were lovers.

Had he acted like a cur—what the young men who now called him friend would have called a cad? He would have liked to feel quite sure—far more sure than he did feel that he had not.

But he had the supreme excuse a man can always put to himself, assured of absolution. This excuse was that he adored Lady Susie, and that his love was not a murky flame, but a bright, pure, steady fire which had already consumed much of the dross in his complex, highly vitalised nature.

Then came a knock on the door. It was Nettle, with a letter on a salver.

"Her Grace has sent you this note, sir. It requires no answer."

There flashed over d'Egremont's mind in hurried, jumbled sequence almost every word that he and Lady Susie had exchanged during the last few days. No, there was nothing, nothing the girl could have repeated to her mother. He had been so careful, and she, in her pathetic childish way, had been so careful too—a little frightened also, maybe. All that they had sworn had been an eternal friendship.

Even so he opened the envelope with shaking fingers. Then he gave a quick inward gasp of relief.

"Tuesday night." Private.

"DEAR MR. D'EGREMONT,-

"I am tired this evening, so I am not coming down to dinner. It would give me such pleasure, if you are really going away to-morrow early, if, when the gentlemen leave the dining-room, you would come up to say good-bye to me in my boudoir. My maid will be waiting at the top of the staircase which runs up from the dining-room lobby, to show you the way.

"I feel that we have seen so little of one

another.

"Yours sincerely,
"Laura St. Andrews."

The only thing that seemed a little strange was the word *private* above the "Dear Mr. d'Egremont." Could the Duchess suppose him the sort of man who might boast to a fellow-guest that he had been singled out by her for this trifling distinction?

Two hours later Her Grace's austerelooking maid stood where d'Egremont had been told he would find her. He felt strung up, excited, ill-at-ease. The coming interview might be of real moment to him—if everything fell out as he was beginning to believe it might do—in the far future.

At first he had felt just a little afraid of the Duchess. He had at once realised what some of her intimates would have denied, that she was an exceptionally clever woman, under her lightsome, "funning" manner. More than once he had seen her give a thoughtful measuring glance at her daughter when they—he and Lady Susie—had been together, and those mild glances had made him wary.

So it was with a beating heart that he followed the maid down a long corridor.

Then they turned into a passage which seemed familiar, and, with a slight shock of surprise, he passed the door of his own bedroom.

A few moments later he was ushered into an apartment of which the lights, to his instinctive relief, were heavily shaded.

The Duchess's boudoir reflected the tastes of its possessor. A fine portrait by Lawrence, of the lady known to social history as "Duchess Charlotte," hung opposite a graceful presentment of the present Duchess by Edward Hughes, painted when the sitter was still a bride.

There were some beautiful little pieces of eighteenth-century furniture, and several ugly, comfortable, Victorian easy chairs. On the turquoise-blue walls each side of the mantelpiece, hung a number of water-colours, some good, some very bad, as well as several miniatures, and on a what-not table were rows of photographs.

As his hostess rose to greet him, he was a little surprised to see that she was still wearing the pleated white skirt and grey and white jumper she had worn at tea-time; and that on a couch—d'Egremont's eyes always noticed everything, however apparently irrelevant—lay a long grey cloak and black hat.

The Duchess smiled, a little tremulously, and there came over him a sudden feeling of—was it apprehension? The expression of her face was quite different from what he had ever seen it; she looked what he felt—nervous.

All at once she went across the room and locked the door; as she turned round she exclaimed, "Don't be surprised! I often do that. All my friends know it's a trick of mine. I do so hate being interrupted——"

She walked slowly back, all the spring gone from her light step, to her low chair.

"Sit down, Mr. d'Egremont," she said. And then suddenly she got up. "No! Perhaps we'd better stand, for I've something to tell you, and time is precious."

And then he did feel, suddenly, terribly, afraid.

"It has come to my knowledge that you are in great, in imminent, danger," she whispered, her voice almost inaudible.

He did not move. He remained still—the woman standing close to him called it to herself, "horribly" still.

Then she saw him glance this way and that—at the door she had just locked; at the door giving into a lobby which led to

her bedroom; and then at the window behind her—his eyes those of a hunted animal.

"You're quite safe here," she said quickly. And, as his gaze became fixed on her quivering face, she added, "But you would no longer be safe, after you have left here tomorrow morning. And I have sent for you to-night to help you to escape."

He made as if to speak. Then his lips

closed again.

The Duchess felt a thrill of relief. She had been so afraid he would put up a fight—pretend, maybe, to misunderstand her.

There was so much more than fear, there was such anguish, in his face, that her righteous anger died, leaving only pity.

"I'm so sorry, so very, very sorry," and she put one of her little hands on his arm.

Suddenly he shook her hand off, and turned his back to her. His head fell forward on his breast, and sounds of hard, difficult sobs wrung her heart.

Unhappy d'Egremont! He was living over his life as a man is said to do when he is drowning—telling himself that, yes, he deserved this frightful punishment, this flinging up of a gateless barrier between him and the future he had meant should be so different from his past.

"Forgive me," he said at last.

And as he turned his ravaged face towards her, she told herself that he was years older than she had thought him to be. But she was mistaken. He was what she had vaguely guessed, that is, thirty-six. But the last few moments had added years to his real age.

"Although I have reason to feel sure that the castle is not being watched, we will take no risks. So I am going to take you out into the park, as if for a stroll, myself. I want to put you in the way of reaching Hilby Junction. I've thought everything out very carefully."

She was speaking in a firm, decided voice now—the voice of the fortunate woman who always has her own way, to whom no one ever ventures to say "no," perhaps because she is too clever to run the risk of denial.

"Go to your room; change into day clothes; and gather up what you feel you must take with you. If by bad luck Nettle should be there, say that you and Lord Ardvilly are going to fish the lower ponds after everyone else has gone to bed. As to what you leave behind it will be packed to-morrow morning, and sent to whatever address you give me."

She unlocked the door. "Mr. d'Egremont?"

"Yes, Duchess."

"I can trust you?"

He saw in her pale sad face the fear to which she would not put a name. "I'm not that sort of coward," he said quickly.

"Be as quick as you can. Your room is

close here.

He was away for about a quarter of an hour, but it seemed far longer to the Duchess. In spite of his implied promise each slow moment held, to her, the threat of a pistol-shot.

But she had done him an injustice. It was true that d'Egremont was not that sort of coward.

"I had to write three letters," he said, when he came back, "and that delayed me. One was to Lord Ardvilly's valet, telling him I have been suddenly called to town, and that I had only a few moments to catch a train. I left it on my dressingtable. As to the two other letters, perhaps

you will glance over them?"

She took the still open envelopes from his hand, and she blushed like a girl when she saw that one was addressed to "The Lady Susie Beaton."

As she drew it out of the envelope, she looked at the writer of that closely covered sheet with a stern, searching look—more stern, more searching than she was herself aware.

" Tuesday night.

"DEAR LADY SUSIE,-

"This is to tell you that I have had bad news which compels me to leave England to-morrow, I fear never to return.

"You and your brother have been so kind to me, we have become such friends, that I feel I may write to you, as well as to Lord Ardvilly. I hope you will not think it impertinent of me to say God bless you.

"Yours sincerely,
"JAKE D'EGREMONT."

The Duchess put the letter back in its envelope. Then she read that addressed to her eldest son.

"Tuesday night." (Private.)

"DEAR ARDVILLY,-

"I have a sudden call abroad to-night which I cannot disregard. I managed to say good-bye to your kind mother, and I have written a line to Lady Susie. You and she were both so kind to me in London, and during the glorious week I have just spent

with you here.

"I shall never forget you, and I hope you will sometimes give me a kind thought. I'm afraid it is not likely that we shall ever meet again. I have told your mother that she has my permission to explain why.

"Yours ever,

"Ј. р'Е."

"Don't you mind my telling them?" she

asked hesitatingly.

"Mind? Of course I mind! But I think it's only fair to them—and to you. I cannot expect you to forgive me, but I do ask, most humbly, your pardon——"

To that she made no answer. His letter to her daughter had brought back her feelings of anger, and yes, of contempt, for this unscrupulous man to whom she was being

so good.

She glanced at the quaint green and gold ormolu clock which had belonged to her own mother, and which those of Duchess Laura's friends who prided themselves on their taste thought a blot on the pretty room. But she would not have exchanged that 1868 clock for the most beautiful old timepiece in the world. It had chimed out all the sad and all the happy half-hours and hours of her life. Now it marked twenty minutes past ten.

"You've got an hour," she said, "to catch the last Brighton train at Hilby Junction, about two and a half miles from here. There's an excursion day-boat to France early to-morrow morning, no passports being required by those who go by it."

He smiled, visualising the French passport made out in the name of d'Artagnan which he had in his coat pocket. "You needn't be anxious about me, Duchess. I shall be all right—that is if I feel it's worth while to be all right."

"It's always worth while to make a new start. We all have to do that some-

times-"

"You're right," he said slowly, "and if I did it for no one else's sake, I'd do it for yours," and again the fires of her anger died down. Together, she leading the way, they went down a narrow little staircase which led to a garden door opening on to what was called "The Duchess's Pleasaunce," though the duchess who had designed that formal walled garden had been dead for over a hundred years.

Then she took his arm. Anyone seeing them, and not recognising the liege lady of the countryside, would take them for sweethearts, trespassing.

When they came to an arch in the high brick wall—"I'm so glad that I've never allowed a door to be put here. I hate feeling cabined and confined," she exclaimed. Then, feeling him shudder slightly, she felt a pang of regret that she had uttered those two sinister words. Had he ever been in prison, she wondered?

She dropped his arm, and they hastened on, now walking very quickly along the grass path leading down towards the river which formed a natural boundary to the

park.

And then, when they were very near the place where she meant to leave him, she asked suddenly, "What made you adopt this terrible, this ignoble, this dangerous way of life, Mr. d'Egremont?"

"One mad act of folly committed when I was twenty. An interview with a harsh, unforgiving father, and a chance meeting with a brute who was looking out for just

such a lad as I was then."

The Duchess then said something which immediately after having said it she regretted having said. But she was at once so excited and so nervous that she spoke aloud her thoughts:

"I am glad my cousin, Lady St. Yves,

was not with us---'

She saw by his face that he knew what was in her mind. He looked sharply, unreasonably hurt.

"You thought I had come here to steal her famous emeralds?" he asked

harshly.

She remained silent, and he went on, speaking for the first time with a touch of excitement in his voice. "It might have been true, of course, but it just happens not to have been true."

She said in a low voice, "I'm sorry. I beg your pardon for having believed it." And then, with an effort, she went on, "Can't you make a new start? We all have to do that sometimes."

"If I do it," he exclaimed, "it will be for your sake—only for your sake! And if I do I give you my word of honour neither you nor anyone you love will ever hear of me again."

"Thank you," she whispered, and then

she put out her hand.

He gripped it so strongly that she nearly cried out.

AT seven the next morning Lady Susie was sitting up in her narrow four-post bed, sipping her early cup of tea. She was feeling sad, for everyone, including her own secret particular friend, was leaving the castle at nine o'clock. It was consoling to know that he, at any rate, would soon be coming back for a week-end.

The door opened suddenly, and, to the girl's surprise, her mother came into the

As she walked towards the bed the Duchess looked so unlike her usual serene happy self that little Lady Susie felt a pang of fear. Had anything happened to Lettice, darling Lettice, who was expecting her first baby so soon?

"Mother! What is the matter?"

" I've brought you a letter which I thought you would like to read before going downstairs."

The girl took the envelope, and, glancing at it, she blushed a painful, hot, ugly blush. "Thank you so much, mother."

Then she added, with a touch of defiance, "I think I'll read it presently-after I've

got up."

"I'd like you to read it now, my dear. Perhaps I ought to tell you that I know what is in it, though Mr. d'Egremont wrote the letter without consulting me."

The Duchess was now speaking almost in a whisper. She went quickly back to the bedroom door, and locked it.

"Mother!"

There was anger, defiance, active rebellion, all contained in the one word.

"My darling child-"

She stopped, abruptly, for the girl had begun reading the letter, and as she read on, all the colour drifted from her face.

"I don't understand," she said help-"What does he mean, mother?"

"It means—oh, Susie, how I wish that I could bear this trouble for you, but there are certain troubles which we poor women have to bear alone."

"I can bear anything-but suspense," the words were uttered in a low, agonised tone. "If you really do know, mother, then tell

me what this letter means!"

"Mr. d'Egremont was being looked for by the police—the police of more than one country. I found out, never mind how, that the Scotland Yard people were waiting to arrest him only till he got away from

here this morning.'

There broke a bitter cry from the girl's lips, and the Duchess hurried on, "I felt —and I think your father will do so too, though I don't intend to tell him about it yet—that I could not send one of my guests, a friend of Robin's and yours, however blameworthy, to walk into the trap that was being laid for him. So last night I sent for him, told him of his danger, and helped him to get away."

Susie's lips just moved. "I see. Thank you, mother," and she turned her face away.

All at once the Duchess burst into tears. She laid her head down on the pillow by her pale tearless young daughter, and began to cry bitterly. "I liked him last night," she sobbed. "He was so game. I liked him so much better than I had ever liked him before. I had guessed there was something queer about him, so had your father——"

Susie turned round. Her face was set,

as if carved in stone.

"Mother! Please don't say any more." Then she lifted up her little head. "He was my friend—he is my friend, still." And then she gave a sudden cry. suppose I shall never see him again? You see what he says here?"

The Duchess snatched up a tiny pink handkerchief which lay on the coverlet. She dabbed her eyes and her child's, too.

"He wrote to your brother, just saying good-bye," she murmured. "But I don't mean to tell Robin what I've told you. I shall simply say Mr. d'Egremont came and said good-bye to me before going away."
The girl said again, "Thank you, mother."

And this time there was a note of true

gratitude in her voice.

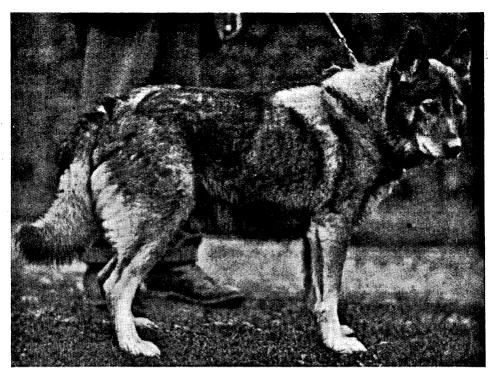
"I did do everything I could," said the Duchess, and again the tears welled up into her eyes.

She was telling herself that she would ever bless the man she had helped to escape a fate he had deserved, if it made her Susie really love her, really trust her.

When close to the door the Duchess sud -"Padlocks!" she denly turned round. cried. "Not only now, but all my life-

and all your life long, my darling!"

And Lady Susie—a piteous look of pain, of shame, of renunciation, on the face which only yesterday had still been that of a child, and was now that of a woman—called back, "Yes, yes, mother—padlocks!"



MUSTI, WHO HAS ACCOMPANIED LADY IRWIN TO INDIA.

ELKHOUNDS AS I KNOW THEM

By LADY IRWIN

WIFE OF THE VICEROY OF INDIA, CO-FOUNDER OF THE BRITISH ELKHOUND SOCIETY

(In an Interview with Annette M. Adams)

Photographs by Gerald T. Warhurst.

HAVE been always keenly interested in elkhounds, as my father kept them, and I, myself, for the last twenty years, have had them at my kennels.

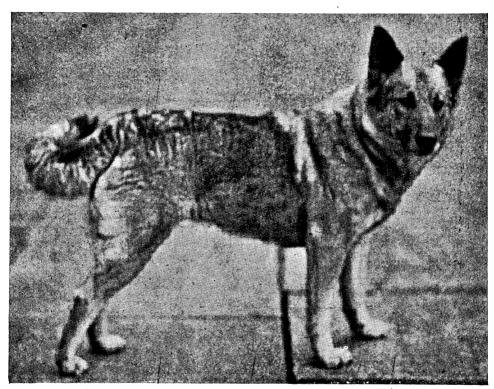
In 1923 I helped to found the British Elkhound Society with Lieut.-Colonel G. J. Scovell, C.B.E., and I was the first President of that Society. Since the Society's foundation greater interest has been manifested in England in these delightful dogs. It is really surprising that these hounds, con-

sidering their beauty, have not been more popular in England, but, since the formation of the Society, a larger number of people have either imported elkhounds, or have bought them from breeders in this country. As a matter of fact, the increase in the number of elkhounds registered at the Kennel Club since 1923 has been rather remarkable, for in that year there were only 7 registered, while in 1925 the number had risen to 109. That is a very satisfactory

development. The membership of the Society has also increased, and by almost 100 per cent. since 1923.

As I am going to India for some years, I have disposed of all my elkhounds with the exception of two. A dear old friend, Musti, I am taking with me; he is ten years old now. I am leaving my best bitch—Binna av Glitre—in England with one of my relatives. She has taken several first prizes. I never keep more than a few dogs permanently, although I have had many litters, and generally keep the puppies for

the name indicates, these dogs are very sporting, and, originally, their occupation in northern latitudes was hunting the largest of the deer tribe. Considering that they are so sporting, they are very good tempered and quiet and lovable with children. The great characteristic of elkhounds is their wisdom, for they are extraordinarily sensible. My puppies and dogs have been always with my children and they have been wonderfully gentle with them and great playmates; even when pulled about by the children they have never lost their temper, but seemed



BINNA AV GLITRE.

six months or so, after which they are sold. I have not shown them very much myself, and have done so only in order to encourage breeding. But I am pleased to see that the entries from other owners of elkhounds at the principal shows have increased considerably in the last two or three years. At Cruft's, for instance, the entries in 1923 for elkhounds were only 14, but in 1925 they were 72, and in 1926 they were 125.

The elkhound is a very delightful companion, and a good house-dog; besides, he is very adaptable. I have known some people to train an elkhound to retrieve. As

to enjoy the fun just as much as the children.

Personally, I like the elkhound much better than the Alsatian, as I think he is less shy and more reliable and far less nervous. The elkhound is of compact build, grey and black in colour, and his coat is most lovely, and, although it is so thick, he does not get dirty like other types of dogs, but keeps himself wonderfully clean. He has erect, pointed ears, a deep chest and short back. He always carries his tail stiffly curled on his back unless he is on the alert, when he carries it down. When he wants to be affectionate

he puts his ears back instead of keeping them erect.

Elkhounds are costly to import from Norway, as there is the quarantine fee to pay in addition to

the cost of the

Scovell, the hon. secretary of the Society, has done a great deal to improve the breed by going to Norway to buy dogs, so that in England we should have the best blood from Norway. There is a

Since the foundation of the British Elkhound Society great strides have been made in the importation of new

Colonel

variation between the breeds of the Norwegian and the Swedish elkhound. One Swedish dog has been imported by Mr. W. F. Holmes, and this is believed to be the only pure Swedish elkhound in the country.

Scovell

told me, after his return from Norway, that he was very much struck with the affection which Norwegian farmers and their families had for their elkhounds, which they used

largely to guard their sheep. He

dog.

strains.

slight

Colonel

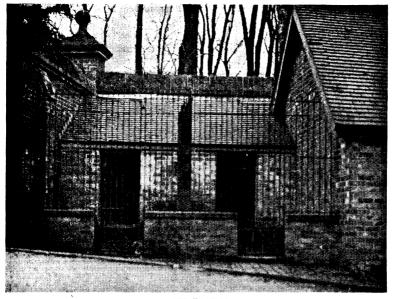
strain is darker in the coat than the Norwegian strain.

My dear old dog Musti is very wise. He always accompanies me to church when we



LADY IRWIN WITH MUSTI, HER FAVOURITE ELKHOUND.

felt that he dared not ask any farmer to sell one of the older dogs, and even the puppies were difficult to buy. This bears out what I said before—that elkhounds make delightful companions, and, being so adaptable, can be trained to do anything. The Swedish are in Yorkshire, as his father did in days gone by. My kennels are in Yorkshire, at Garrowby, and the church is about a mile and a half from the house. Although I have never trained him, he is so sensible that he waits most patiently outside until the end



THE KENNELS.

of the service, as he understands that he is not to come into the church. By some means of dog-mind calculation he is able to guess the length of the service, as he appears always to be waiting for me when I come out. One Sunday, I remember, we had a longer service—perhaps the sermon was longer—and Musti evidently thought he had waited long enough, and, coming to the end

of his tether, he gave a couple of short, sharp barks, which, I suppose, he intended as a signal to me that it was time I went home. Needless to say, he was very much pleased when I did come out. I was rather amused at the incident.

Both Binna and Musti are splendid travellers, and I frequently take them with me to London and elsewhere. They always behave

admirably. I drive my own car and I have often one or both with me, leaving them in the car while I go shopping, or make a call, and they are always most patient, neither barking nor crying because they are left outside. They understand, although I have never trained them specially, merely telling them to wait, which they do most sensibly. They soon learn what one expects them to do.



LORD IRWIN'S HARRIERS.



GARROWBY SEEN FROM THE STABLEYARD.



GARROWBY: THE GARDEN FRONTAGE.

And when I take them walking with me in London, even in the midst of the traffic, they are always very sensible and give no trouble when crossing the road, although I think it wiser then to put them on a lead.

Here is another instance of an elkhound's wisdom. When my dogs are in town with me it is customary for my maid to put them into my bedroom at night when I am out. They seem to realise the difference between day and night, because if they were left in a room alone in the daytime they would not be happy and might bark, but at night they seem to understand that they are to wait for me quietly, no matter how late I may be returning from a party, and not to make any noise. I remember one evening my old dog Musti was put into my bedroom when I was out to dinner. When I came back the latch or the lock of the front door stuck and I was not able to open it. The housemaids slept on another floor and I was not able to attract their attention. I suddenly thought of calling Musti to my aid, so I called him from the street, and hearing me he commenced to bark loudly, and in such a peremptory manner that the servants came and let me That, I think, is another proof of an elkhound's wisdom and his thinking power.

These dogs are very faithful and become attached devotedly to those whom they like. To others they do not show any active dislike, but they are absolutely uninterested in them and take no notice of people for whom they do not care. My dogs are wonderfully attached to me and to my children, and are fond of the kennel man, but they do not trouble about anyone else. Some years ago I was going to the West Indies and I took Musti with me to my father-in-law's house, from where I went up to London to start on my journey. He was broken-hearted at being left without me in a strange place and went out in search of me. Poor dog, he

wandered about looking for me for twelve hours, and then he was found. So I had to have him taken back to the kennels at Garrowby, where he remained quite happily while I was abroad. I think if the children had been at the other house Musti would have remained there peacefully, but it just shows how wonderfully faithful these dogs are and how they attach themselves to one person.

I am feeling rather concerned about taking Musti to India on account of the voyage through the Red Sea. He will, I fear, feel the heat there extremely, on account of his very thick coat, and I am debating in my own mind whether I shall have him shaved before we get to the tropics, so that he will feel cooler. Of course it would detract from his appearance, but then his hair will grow very quickly again. I do not anticipate that the change of climate in India will have any bad effect on him, or injure his health, as he will be at Simla and Delhi, where there is never any great heat. Musti is sire to some of Binna's puppies, which have turned out very well indeed.

The late Major Hicks-Beach was one of the earliest and one of the most important breeders of elkhounds in England. He had two famous dogs-Clinker and King-the latter winning at every show at that time, and never being beaten. King was one of the ancestors of my old dog Musti. Major Hicks-Beach's opinion of elkhounds may be interesting to quote. He said: "Elkhounds are trustworthy as companions and make nice indoor pets. They are very hardy out of doors. Some of mine are very fond of water." In memory of Major Hicks-Beach his children have recently presented a Challenge Cup to the British Elkhound Society, but I do not think it has been decided yet under what conditions the Cup will be given, or for what Show.



SHIPPING COMBINE

By LAUNCELOT JEFFREYS

FRANK GILLETT ILLUSTRATED BY

Steamship Company. In case you have conjured up a vision of handsome offices in Cockspur Street

TRADE was slack with the Taggart

and a fast and commodious fleet of ocean greyhounds, it may be as well to state at once that the Taggart Steamship Company was owned, controlled, and navigated by June Taggart, aged twenty; that the Company's one and only vessel, the ferry-boat Raven, wasn't a steamship at all, but a small and rather battered motor-boat; and that the Company's only employee, engineer, and deck-hand all rolled into one was laid up with rheumatism.

June was seated on a bollard at the end of the small pier, alternately drinking in the beauty of the summer evening and ruminating darkly on the slump in the shipping business. Below her the Raven bobbed lazily up and down, tugging gently at her mooring ropes as though impatient to get home and to bed. The last trip was due to leave in five minutes, for the Raven ran strictly to a schedule; at least, she did when June's wrist-watch hadn't stopped, and that wasn't very often—only when she forgot to wind it.

She looked at it now and rose to her feet. "Oh, well," she reflected, as she cast off the bow mooring. "It's no use waiting any longer. There's nobody crossing the bay this evening."

She was wrong, however. A shout came from the road leading to the pier, warning her to wait, and a moment later a young man in a raincoat ran up the pier and leaped lightly on board.

"Is this the ferry across Horse Sand Bay?" he asked, looking up at her where she still stood, bow-rope in hand, on the edge of the pier.

June nodded. "You're only just in time," she said severely.

Now, June Taggart was well worth looking at, as most of the male passengers who travelled by the Raven quickly decided. Whether they preferred her straight supple figure, or her clear grey eyes fringed with black lashes, or favoured her piquant

The young man went on looking at her.

features and the determined tilt of her chin, the male passengers—men of widely differing views on most subjects—were unanimous on one point: that June Taggart had been among those present when beauty was being handed round.

The new-comer was quite obviously of the same opinion. He went on looking, taking no pains at all to conceal his apprecia-

June was used to admiration, and as a rule took it for granted. But this evening, for some quite unaccountable reason, she grew flustered. She coloured up hotly, and then, with a great show of energy, threw the bow-rope aboard and jumped hurriedly after it. The not unnatural result was that she caught her foot in a ring-bolt and took a header into the bottom of the boat—at least, it would have been the bottom if the young man hadn't had the presence of mind to catch her in his arms. There he held her tight for quite five seconds, until June, more hot and flustered than ever, pushed herself free, moved forward and let in the clutch, and took her stand by the little wheel.

The bow swung away from the pier. Raven's engine throbbed steadily, if a trifle wheezily. June, with a pink spot of colour in each cheek, looked straight to her front, studiously ignoring her passenger. She was Who was he, this raincoat-habited put out. stranger, to walk calmly aboard her boat, stare at her, and then hold her in his arms as though he owned her? Nice goings on, thought June, if the captain and owner of every ferry-boat was liable to be embraced

by demonstrative male passengers. The

thing was an outrage.

"I say," came a voice from behind her, "we don't seem to be making much progress. do we?"

"Probably not," said June, in a voice that should have transformed the young man into an icicle on the spot. "As it happens, we've got a strong tide against us."

The young man was silent for the moment. The Raven's engine went on chugging.

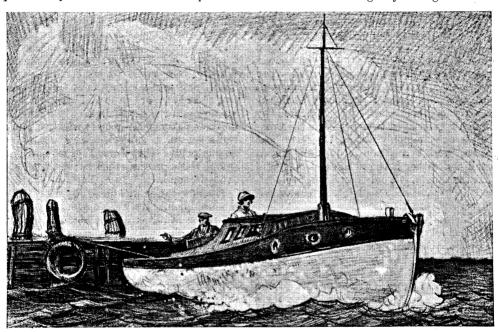
"I feel sure," said the voice behind her, plaintively, "that we'd get along much quicker if you cast off the stern-rope.

"Intuition. When I first stepped on board this boat, and looked at you, I felt we were born to be friends. When you so providentially stumbled and I caught you in my-when I caught you, I felt certain of it. And when you made that little mistake about the stern-rope and were sporting enough to laugh over it, why, I felt that we were friends. Sailing barge on the starboard bow, cap'n."

"It's funny you felt that way about it, because I felt that we were going to be

enemies."

"In that case I'm glad you laughed. You



"'I feel sure,' said the voice behind her plaintively, 'that we'd get along much quicker if you cast off the stern-rope. Or are you trying to tow the pier across to the other side?'"

are you trying to tow the pier across to the other side?"

June looked round sharply. It was true. The Raven was still bound firmly to the pier.

She did the only possible thing in the circumstances: she leaned against the wheel and dissolved into helpless laughter.

"Brownlie," said the young man, as they sped on their way. "Bill Brownlie, that's my name. You can call me Bill. What's yours? Nothing like knowing each other's names when you're going to be friends, is there?"

"My name's June Taggart. How do you know we are going to be friends?"

can't possibly join in a hearty laugh with an enemy."

June made no comment on this.

"How long have you been running this ferry-boat?" asked Bill chattily.

"Six months."

" Are you the owner, or simply the cap-

"I'm the captain and owner," proudly.

"By Jove! That's the stuff to give 'em. Make it pay?"

"Fairly well, on the whole."

"Want an assistant to help you run her? It must be a difficult job to work her alone."

June turned and looked at Bill apprais-He appeared to be a young man with whom events moved fast. As a matter of fact, she was in temporary need of help, since old Jonah, who doubled the parts of deck-hand and engineer, was confined to his bed with rheumatism.

"Are you thinking of recommending

someone?"" she asked calmly.

"Rather. I think I know the very man for you. Steady, honest and reliable, a born sailor, and a first-class engineer. Myself, in fact. I'll take on for a week's trial without wages. After that you shall pay me whatever you like. Starboard a point, cap'n. Now luff, and take a reef in the main braces—sorry; I always talk like that when I go to sea. Will you take me on, June?"

The use, thus early in their acquaintance, of her Christian name by the stranger decided June against him. Obviously he would

never do.

"I don't need you, thanks. My regular man, Jonah, is laid up to-day, but I expect him back in a day or two. I can manage alone till then."

"Jonah! Good Heavens, fancy employing a man with a name like that! It's only a matter of time before you have to cast him overboard to the whales."

June laughed, and slowed down the engine as they approached the pier on the farther

side.

"Oh, well," she said, "he and I have managed all right for the last six months, in spite of his name. Here we are. Sixpence, please. Good night."

II.

"I THOUGHT I'd just breeze along," explained Bill early the next morning, "in case old Jonah hadn't risen from his bed of sickness. As he hasn't, I'll take over." He stepped on to the *Raven*, where June, her shoes and stockings removed, her hair blowing in the morning air and her eyes aglow with youth and health, was cleaning down the boat. "Come aboard, cap'n."

The girl regarded him rather doubtfully. "You seem to be taking the whole thing for granted," she observed with some truth.

"How else could I take it? Here are you short-handed and over-worked, and here am I, a born sea-dog, steady, honest—well, what I said last night. No competitors, as far as I can see, and no wages asked for a week. What could be fairer than that?"

"If I take you on you'll have to behave. I shall expect you to do exactly what I tell

you."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"You'll have to scrub the deck, keep the engine in running order, fill up with oil and petrol when necessary, collect the fares from the passengers, make yourself useful with the boat-hook when we leave and come alongside piers——"

"Anything else?"

"That'll do to go on with. Let's see you make a start with this deck," said June, handing him the mop.

And so Bill was enrolled as mate of the

Raven.

A week later he was still there, in Jonah's continued absence. June had been to see the old man, and found him looking hale and well, though he declared that he was still too rheumaticky to walk.

As a matter of fact, he wasn't missed, as far as running the *Raven* was concerned. Bill was proving himself an excellent engineer and deck-hand. His knowledge of motor engines was considerable, and the *Raven's* rather dilapidated inner works were kept running with clockwork precision. June was gratified too to note that he showed himself amenable to her orders. She had feared that he might exhibit a tendency towards getting fresh. The result was they became excellent friends in no time.

"This engine wants a new crankshaft badly," Bill informed her one day, looking up from a comprehensive overhaul of the Raven's engine, and exhibiting a countenance liberally streaked with perspiration and oil.

"I know, but I can't afford it. You see, I've got a heavy mortgage on the boat to pay off, and how in the world I'm going to do that I don't know, what with the high cost of living, and running expenses, and—and heavy labour charges." Bill had just been put on the wage list after his week's probation, at twenty-five shillings a week.

probation, at twenty-five shillings a week.
"I like that," he said indignantly.
"With me working myself to skin and bone on starvation wages! Sweated labour, I

call it."

"Sweated labour," laughed June, "is the right expression. Bill, if only you could see your face!"

"So we're mortgaged up to the hilt, are we?" asked Bill, ignoring the reflection on

his personal appearance.

"Yes. When father and mother died within a few months of each other, I was left very badly off. I wasn't going to live on the charity of distant relations, so I hit on the idea of making a living by running a ferry across Horse Sand Bay. I hadn't

enough money to buy the Raven outright, so I put down all the cash I had and got the rest on a mortgage on the boat. I haven't been able to pay off much of it. This job hasn't given me much more than a bare living up to now. Still, that's something, I suppose," said Miss Taggart philosophically.

III.

"June," said Bill slowly, "do you mind if

I ask you something?"

They were both reclining side by side in the bottom of the boat, eating their midday meal. The two-o'clock trip was due to run in a guerter of an hour.

in a quarter of an hour.

"Hard-boiled eggs," said June contentedly, producing one and holding it up between finger and thumb. "Ladore them. No matter how many hard-boiled eggs I put away, I'm always ready for more."

"I was asking you," continued Bill patiently, "if you mind my asking me—my

asking you---'

"If it's an egg you want, why not ask for it straight out? I can spare one. Here you are."

"'Tisn't an egg. It's something more important than a dozen eggs—than fifty thousand eggs!"

"If it's a ham sandwich, it's no use.

I've eaten them all."

"June," said Bill tragically, "why mock me with ham sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs when my heart is breaking? What I want to ask you is—er—well, not to put too fine a point on it, will you marry me?"

"It's the sun," she said tolerantly, "or the petrol fumes. That's it. 'Gassed by petrol fumes, he madly proposes marriage to his captain.' Go for'ard and hang your head over the bow, Bill. It'll soon pass."

"June," Bill said wildly, "this is serious. You may make a joke of me if you like, but my whole life hangs in the balance. If you

knew how much I——"

"Hey, mister," said a man, suddenly appearing on the edge of the pier and looking down, "what time does the two-o'clock trip go?"

"Half-past three to-morrow afternoon," Bill informed him swiftly. "Good-bye till

then.

"But look here, that's no good to me. I've got to get across this afternoon. I got to——"

"Right-ho! Come back in half an hour and we'll run a special trip for you."

"Thank you, sir. Thank you very much."

"Don't mention it. June darling," went on Bill rapidly, as the man disappeared, "I love you. I adore you. I've said nothing about it up to now, but I can't keep it in any longer. Ever since I saw you that first day and you fell into my arms, I've known you were the only girl on this earth I should ever want to marry. I've felt it more strongly every hour I've been with you."

He attempted to slip his arm round her, and hurriedly withdrew it as a little girl appeared on the pier above them.

appeared on the pier above them.

"Please, sir," she said shrilly, "Mother says would you slip in to Mr. Mason's on the other side and get her a dozen eggs, and please, sir, would you mind bringing over the washing that Mrs. Gibbs said she'd put on your boat?"

"All right," said Bill through his teeth. "Please, sir, you'll be particular not to

forget the washing, Mother said."

"I shall remember the washing," Bill said bitterly, "to my dying day."

The little girl withdrew with a mind at

"June dear, think how happy we shall be running this boat together as husband and wife."

"And think of the headlines in the papers," contributed June flippantly. "'Romance of the sea. Captain weds the mate.' It's no good, Bill, old man. I simply can't take it seriously. I just want to laugh about it, so I can't possibly love you, or I should be deadly serious. I won't marry a man I don't love, so I can't marry you. That's logic, anyway."

"You would soon learn to-"

"Bill," she said severely, "that's enough. The two-o'clock run is due, so get up and crank the engine. I'm sorry I can't meet you in a more accommodating spirit, but I can't. Now, no more nonsense about love while you are on this ship, or I shall have to dismiss you. Start her up."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Bill mechanically. But there was mutiny in his heart.

IV.

"Jonah, have you ever been in love?" Bill asked.

The old man, seated at ease in front of his kitchen fire, scratched his chin dubiously.

"Love?" he echoed. "Love ain't been much in my line, Mr. Brownlie. Of course, there was little Nancy Jakes I was courting

away back in eighteen seventy-eight, but I don't know that you'd call that love, properly speaking. I didn't seem to take on much when she married Steve Watson sudden like."

"But surely you must know whether

you've ever been married?"

"Oh, married!" exclaimed Jonah, much relieved. "I thought you was talking of love. Yes, I bin married right enough. Three times," he added as an afterthought.

"In that case," said Bill heartily, "you are the very man I want. It's hardly too much to describe you as an expert in

matrimony."

"Ah, I reckon you may say so! But love and marriage ain't got much to do with each other."

"Sometimes they have, Jonah. They

have in my case."

"Oho!" Jonah's old eyes became suddenly very shrewd. "In love, are you? P'r'aps I might make a guess as to who the girl is, and then again, p'r'aps I mightn't. It wouldn't be with the skipper of a smart little craft that you and I know of?" The old man chuckled prodigiously.

" Oh, well---"

"You're a cunning one, you are! Coming up here and offering me two pound ten a week to keep on lying low and say my rheumatics ain't no better! Why, I thought you was one of them writer chaps collectin' material for a book about the sea."

"Since you've guessed it, there's no use

making any secret about it."

"I reckon not. And what might she have said to you when you asked her—always assooming, of course, that you 'ave asked her?"

"Laughed at me, and told me to get on with my work or she'd give me the sack."

"That's Miss June all over, that is. Laugh—there never was such a one for laughing as she is! I remember one time I sat down on one of them timber baulks on the pier to smoke my pipe, and didn't find out it was newly tarred till I got up and left the seat of my trousis behind. I thought she'd ha' bust herself."

. "Well, she won't have me, Jonah, and that's the long and short of it."

"And you want my advice?"

"That's the idea."

"You've come to the right man, Mr. Brownlie, as you said yourself just now. I've known Miss June since she could walk. There ain't much about her as I don't know."

"Then how——"

"Master her. That's the only way you or any other man will ever get her. P'r'aps you've made the mistake of being softspoken and soapy with her—always agreeable and submissive-like."

"I certainly have tried to make myself as

pleasant as possible."

"Ah! Then don't you try that line no more," said Jonah with great scorn. "It don't pay with a high-spirited girl like that. She wants something more than that in a lover—someone who can take and master her. She's told me so herself many a time—and I could ha' seen it for myself if she hadn't. The man she can order about and tell him to get on with his work or he'll get the push, ain't going to cut no ice with Miss June."

Bill sat gazing into the fire. Instinct told him that old Jonah was right. As long as he held his present job he was bound to act under her orders. Should he give it up and try again from a fresh angle? Dimly the glimmering of an idea took shape in his brain, and he rose to his feet and reached for his cap.

"Jonah, you're a genius," he said cordially. "Of course you're right. I'm going to try and put your advice into practice. I may not succeed, but I'll have a jolly

good try."

v

BILL seized the very next occasion that they crossed the bay without passengers to put his idea into operation. He slowed down the *Raven* to half speed and, sitting back in the little seat by the engine, looked at June with a calculating eye.

"You remember what I was saying to you the other day?" he asked casually.

"You mean about a new crankshaft? I've been thinking it over, Bill, and I don't see that we can possibly afford it. We must——"

"I don't mean about the new crankshaft. I mean about marrying me."

" Oh!"

He paused to allow the idea to sink in. June, headed off the subject of crankshafts, considered the matter a moment. When she spoke it was with some asperity.

"I thought I told you never to mention the subject again, on pain of dismissal."

"So you did."

"Then what do you mean by bringing it up? I've a good mind to give you a week's wages in lieu of notice."

"Then you won't marry me?"

"Certainly not."

"Right!"

Bill gave the boat full speed ahead. Then he got up and gently but firmly took the wheel from her grasp.

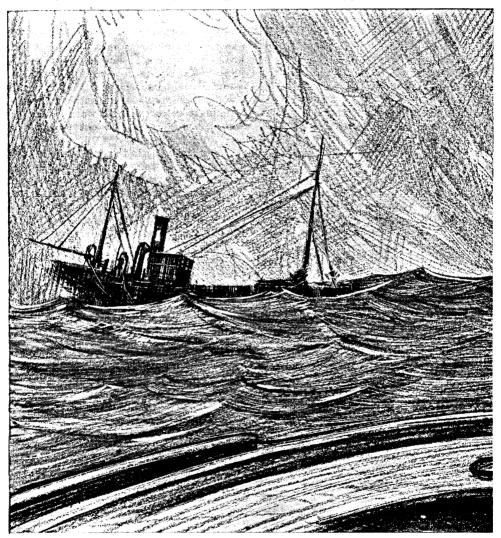
"You go and sit down over there," he said kindly. "I'm taking charge."

"What for?"

"The idea is roughly as follows. You have refused to marry me when I asked you nicely, although you are really in love with me-

"I'm not!" indignantly.

"So I'm doing the cave-man act. The



"She had evidently been in collision in the fog and been abandoned by the crew."

the wheel over, and the Raven swept round in a wide semicircle and headed out to sea.

June sat down with a gasp of astonish-There was something about Bill's resolute bearing that was new to her, and not wholly displeasing.

"Why-what in the world-Bill, whatever are you doing?"

"Going out to sea," Bill explained briefly.

Raven is now in my clutches, and I'm going. to take her out to sea and keep her there until you agree to marry me."

Amazement bereft June of all power of speech for a while.

"But this—this is piracy!" she gasped at length.

"Absolutely," Bill agreed.

"The penalty is imprisonment."

"Hanging," he corrected. "Don't be mean, June. Don't rob me of my little hour of triumph. I'm liable to be hanged at the yard-arm, and don't you forget it."

"Bill, you're being simply ridiculous!"

"Yo, ho ho, and a bottle of rum," chanted Bill lyrically. used to this high-handed sort of treatment. She grew very angry.

"Bill," she said furiously, "I shall never speak to you again."

" Yes ?",

"You're fired. As soon as we get back to land, you go."



"' Don't you see, Bill? SALVAGE! If we can tow her in we shall get the salvage money. It's always been a little private dream of my own to find an abandoned ship and bring her in. I shall be able to pay off the mortgage on the Raven and have her properly done up."

"You really mean to take me out to sea and keep me there until—until—"

"Until you consent to marry me. Sure thing."

June was a determined and forceful young woman who had been in the habit most of her life of having her own way. She was not "As soon as we get back to land," said Bill happily, "I mean to put up the banns. Otherwise we never *shall* get back."

"You can't seriously mean that."

"Can't I? You watch."

The motor-boat was now clear of the bay, and lifting gently to the swell outside. June,

scarlet with indignation, settled herself resolutely down in the stern. If this was to be a trial of wills, she was not going to shirk the issue. Bill should see if he had a weakling to deal with. He should be taught a lesson.

It was about this time that the fog came down, suddenly, almost without warning. A faint blurring of the horizon, a constriction of the area of sea visible around them, and the *Raven* was cleaving a way through a lonely world, flanked with soft impalpable walls of white mist.

Bill hunted up the little compass they kept on board. For about an hour he held the *Raven* steadily to her course, then he switched off the engine and filled his pipe. . . .

They spoke only once during the course of that long day, while the fog lay heavy

on the sea.

"By George!" said Bill suddenly, smiting his thigh, "I knew there was something missing!"

"What is it?" June asked, despite

herself.

"The skull and cross-bones! I say, June, I suppose you couldn't embroider me a pirate flag? I dare say I could rig up a most with the boat-hook."

There was no answer.

* * * * *

It was towards sundown, just as the fog was lifting, that Bill's resolution gave way. The sight of the still dignified but pathetic little figure in the stern was too much for him. He was a brute, Bill reflected, ever to have thought of such a callous, medieval, cruel, out-of-date sort of idea. Poor little June! She had eaten nothing since halfpast seven, she was chilled to the marrow, and yet her pluck held out. He had no right to try to force her into a promise that was distasteful to her. He was a mean hound. Bill could have kicked himself with remorse.

He stood up and took a last look round, preparatory to hauling down the pirate flag, metaphorically speaking. The weather was clearing rapidly. The land was not yet visible, but about a mile off Bill made out a small vessel. There was something very queer about that ship, he decided at once. She appeared to be making no way, and was heavily down by the head. In fact, she looked as though she were on the point of sinking.

Bill decided to investigate without further delay. He started up the engine, and within

a few minutes they were circling slowly round the deserted ship—for such she undoubtedly was. Her bows were partly stove in. She had evidently been in collision in the fog and been abandoned by the crew, as was shown by the falls hanging down almost to the water from her only pair of davits.

"A steam drifter," Bill mused aloud, "abandoned and derelict. Probably kept from sinking by her forward bulkhead."

He looked round at June—a transformed June. She was standing up in the stern, her figure tense, her eyes aglow with excitement.

"What luck!" she cried. "What amazing luck!"

"Luck?"

"Yes. Don't you see, Bill? SALVAGE! If we can tow her in we shall get the salvage money. It's always been a little private dream of my own to find an abandoned ship and bring her in. I shall be able to pay off the mortgage on the *Raven* and have her properly done up, and—Oh, Bill, isn't it perfectly wonderful?"

"I see what you mean, by Jove!"

"We shall have the tide with us for the next six hours, and I think the *Raven* has enough power to do it if it takes us all night. It's only about ten miles. Bill, we simply must do it. Come on—let's go alongside."

Bill, now thoroughly infected with her excitement, stooped down to let in the clutch, when an idea struck him. It was such a very dastardly idea that his first instinct was to reject it at once. But after all, why not? All's fair in love and war, thought Bill. As far as being unscrupulous was concerned, he had burned his boats already. So, stifling the voice of conscience, he straightened himself up again.

"There's just one little preliminary," he said, "before we start to tow her."

"Yes? What is it? Oh, hurry, hurry, before she sinks or they come back! I can't believe it's true."

"It isn't yet," Bill admitted. "You see, June, you haven't given me your promise."

"My promise?"

"To marry me, you know."

June stood rigid as though turned to stone, all the excitement struck out of her. Bill, cursing himself for his perfidy, made a last effort at persuasion.

"Be a sport, June, and say yes. I know it's a dirty trick I'm playing on you, but I do love you and I want you so badly I would do my own mother in if it would help.

Just say you'll marry me, and we'll get a move on and tow this hulk in and then go ashore and collect the cash."

June spoke at last, very distinctly and

without emotion of any kind.

"If you will help me to tow this ship to land and beach her, I promise on my word of honour that I will marry you whenever you like."

"Then let's have at it," said Bill with outward cheerfulness, but hating himself all

the same.

Day was breaking by the time they had beached their find inside the mouth of the bay, and shortly after Bill helped the girl to step stiffly ashore. They were both tired out and deadly hungry, having had nothing to eat for nearly twenty-four hours, but for all that June seemed in no hurry to get home and to bed. Instead, she sat down on one of the baulks of the pier, the same one on which old Jonah had once left the seat of his trousers.

"It's been a wonderful day, hasn't it,

Bill?" she said softly.

Bill was feeling wretched. All his manhood had risen up in revolt at the mean way he had pressed home the advantage he held over a helpless girl.

He came to a sudden decision.

"June, I played a rotten trick on you out there when we found the trawler," he said. "I'm sorry—more sorry than I can say. I don't suppose you can ever forgive me, but I can at least set you free from the promise you gave under compulsion. June, we're not going to get married. You're free."

The girl picked up a shaving of wood and

studied it intently.

"Am I to understand," she asked, "that you are breaking off our engagement?"

"Engagement! A nice sort of engagement that was! When I think of the way I behaved, I could drop myself over the pier with a brick round my neck."

"Then you don't want me?"

"Want you!" Words failed him for a moment. "I want you more than anything in the world"

in the world."

"Listen, Bill. When you pirated my ship and ran off with me, I hated you—especially when you said that I really loved you. Words can't express how much I hated you. Then I had to sit and shiver and think all day long, and presently I didn't hate you quite so much. In fact, I almost began to—almost began to—"

"Yes—yes?"

"To like you," she whispered. "I wanted to give in and say yes, but how could I? I had my pride to consider. Then we found that wreck, and I thought to myself, excited as I was, 'What a splendid idea it would be if Bill refused to tow it in until I promised to marry him.' Oh, how I wanted you to say that, but I didn't think you would be clever enough. And then—oh, Bill dear, you're choking me—you gave me the chance to climb down without sacrificing my pride. So you see—Bill, I can hardly breathe—if you break it off now I shall have to—propose—to you—myself.

SHIPWRECK.

ONCE, standing on a scarped and crumbling mound Of salt, drenched shingle, desolate and grey, With blown gulls screaming through the violent day, I saw a ship break from her anchoring-ground And, helpless in the running storm, swing round, Lurching into a smother of spume and spray; Sidelong, to rocks submerged, she took her way, And there her rending and her ending found. Let no man liken me, if you were dead, Unto a ship so lost: death cannot mar The love that moves the sun and every star; But if from mine to other arms you fled Then were I wrecked indeed! O foolish dread, For mine, I know triumphantly, you are!

ROMANCE IN THE BIG BOX

By C. HEDLEY BARKER

ILLUSTRATED BY F. E. HILEY

I was Bill's job to waft the members of the Big Box fraternity heavenwards every morning at nine. They called it the Big Box because that was what it was; floor after floor of windows and doors and corridors, high, and square, and unlovely, with a bold advertisement splashed across its straight façade every night at sunset. The fraternity were brokers, and agents, and all sorts of other things, with a private detective and a commercial artist thrown in.

And Bill used to waft 'em. A frightfully cheerful man, according to the account of Miss Wing, but, cheerful in a glum sort of Wooden, if ever a man was. would sing, rather than say his good mornings to the fraternity, and every time he greeted anyone it would mean a bar dropped from "Don't let 'em scrap the British Navee," for Bill used solemnly, but cheerfully, to whistle this every day of his life, all the time, hot or cold, hail or blow, winter or summer. Lower lip drawn back, tongue between teeth, Bill would eternally whistle, with a lugubrious eye piercing the lift-shaft, and the walls of the Big Box to look at something miles away. Once Mr. Matheson Dodd troubled himself to inquire as to the far spot which continually engaged Bill's attention, and Bill replied, discouragingly, "Oh, nuffink, sir. I was miles away—years You know." And Bill had quickly away. resumed at the bar where he left off.

However, despite his preoccupation with the far spot, years away, Bill saw a good deal more than he was popularly supposed to. The fraternity would have been surprised. "It's a mystery to me," they would say, one to the other, "how Bill knows anybody in the building. Does he ever look at you? No. Or you? No. Never looks at anybody. He's a knock-out." Yet Bill knew that Miss Wing was more than passing

fair. He knew that she had ankles of quite exceptional shapeliness, and an odour that reminded you of something you had once smelled in a dreamland garden. These things Bill knew, and behind his wooden countenance he privily wished himself a yellow daffodil, of all things. For, when daffodils were in season, Miss Wing always wore a yellow daffodil at her waist.

Third door to the right, third floor, bore a neat brass plate—MATHESON DODD, PRIVATE EXAMINATIONS. Matheson Dodd considered "examinations" had been an inspiration—it gave tone to the profession. For a private inquiry agent he was not at all bad. He was A1 at probing, and sifting, and weighing things for helpless people. He went off mysteriously to Paris, and Vienna, and Brussels, and even to Wigan, on secret missions for worried folk. have seen Matheson Dodd you would never have believed him to be incredibly nervous with women who wore yellow daffodils. But he was. And Bill, who never looked at anyone, knew about it. In the intervals of wishing himself a yellow daffodil, he wished himself Matheson Dodd.

Now, we begin to get near the story, which is one of love, and nervousness, and feminine tears, and yellow daffodils, and unsuspected qualities in a wooden, whistling liftman.

Matheson Dodd approached the Big Box at a trot, for it was two minutes past nine, and Miss Wing had a habit of punctuality. Miss Wing had entered the Big Box exactly two hundred times. Matheson Dodd knew, for he had, on the occasion of her introduction to the fraternity, registered the date as a red-letter day in his life. Never would he forget that morning. He had stepped into the lift as usual, and there she was, more like a little wren than anything, he had decided, so spry in her movements was

she, and so bright-eyed, and so shy. She wore, as usual, a yellow daffodil. She had insteps that cried aloud for a poet, and a fragrance. The fragrance filled the lift, and it filled Matheson Dodd, so that he was almost drunk with it.

This morning was, then, the two-hundredth morning. Matheson Dodd didn't know it, but his heart had bumped out extra beats to the tune of some two thousand or so since Miss Wing first appeared on the scene. But, never, never once had he got any further beyond "Good morning!" than a comment on

was a stroke of luck for some ordinary mortal. Why not, therefore, for Chas. Hinkson?

Matheson Dodd reached the lift breathless. Afar off, his sleuth's eye had singled out her unexampled limbs as they bore her towards business. Afar off, he had recognised the tilt of her nifty French hat. Only Matheson Dodd could tell how well he was repaid for that sprint. He dashed into heaven. Bill, a blasé Peter at the Gate, inserted a singsong "Morningsir" between British and Navy, clanged the steel door, flicked his



"'Good morning, Miss Wing,' he said. 'Rather better, this morning. Not so much bite in the wind.'
And Miss Wing, sweet Miss Wing, made the usual reply, and waited."

the weather. Love had ever its penalties, and the penalty for Matheson Dodd was silence, and a weakness at the knees in her presence. He had what is called an inferiority complex. Every day, with a kind of inverted Couéism, he grew more and more of a worm beneath her feet.

Of course, he was all that. There wasn't a male in the whole Big Box who was anything else, compared with Miss Wing. She was triumphantly the queen of her kind, without, believe me, a fault in her character, or a blemish on her fairness. Nevertheless, one Hinkson had long told himself that she

switch, and, as the lift purred aloft, held his ruminative eye steadily on the far spot.

Matheson Dodd, briefly in Paradise, raised his hat. You should have seen that worshipful gesture! What reverence, what love, what sheer bliss informed the sweep of that topper! "Good morning, Miss Wing," he said. "Rather better, this morning. Not so much bite in the wind."

And Miss Wing, sweet Miss Wing, made the usual reply, and waited, hoping. There was something so taking about Matheson Dodd. So indefinable, but, yes, taking. She looked at him; looked at his square jaw, his clear, ruddy complexion, his bright eyes, his kind mouth. And, discovering herself in a rather forward thought anent the kind mouth, she blushed rose-pink. Ah, Dodd, how distracted thou wert, how thrilled, and how exceeding daft in thy helplessness!

Bump! Clang!

Matheson Dodd gazed uncertainly and regretfully at the third floor, raised his hat to Miss Wing, and walked out in a daze. Then he turned, and shot a glance at Bill; at Bill, wooden, with the far-away gaze, whistling, whistling. Miss Wing suddenly trilled a musical laugh, for the glance was so comically vicious. "Oaf," thought Matheson Dodd. "Lout. Boor. Clod. To go whistling, and being blasted wooden, with an angel in the lift, a goddess—a—

At which Matheson Dodd ceased, and listened attentively to the light tap-tap of her heels as the lift stopped on the floor above. Her office-door banged. Her chair creaked. She was now, Matheson Dodd judged, about to perform Commercial Art. Ah, well, one of these days . . .!

It was ever thus with Matheson Dodd. One of these days. Meantime, Chas. Hinkson was making hay under a beaming sun. Directly Miss Wing's door closed Chas. Hinkson's red head appeared questing around his own door. Quickly, he darted back into his own office, reappeared freighted with a bouquet of flowers, and knocked on the magic portal. Miss Wing appeared, delicious in a yellow overall, with her mop of yellow hair uncovered and gleaming. It was Chas. Hinkson's fiftieth bouquet. He hoped she would ask him in this morning. She did.

A pushful sort of chap was Chas. "Tell me," he said, without preamble, "if there's the little brother of a hope, if it's only this size." He measured off a very small portion of his finger-nail.

Miss Wing looked grave, and was afraid she couldn't be definite.

"At any rate," persisted Chas., glumly, "say that you don't absolutely detest me."

"Oh no," sighed Miss Wing. "I don't detest you. Now, please go. I really must get on."

As C. H. left the room, sad and unwilling, Miss Wing took another flower from the bouquet, and cried into it. Why, oh why hadn't Matheson Dodd got Chas. Hinkson's eyes and heart?

Miss Wing prayed. She prayed to Cupid. "Dear Cupid," she whispered, "be a sport,

you rotter." Then she laughed, and dabbed at her eyes. After which she looked at herself in the mirror, and saw two large, bright, brimming tears, one standing on each eyelid. "Little fool!" she muttered. "Dash that Hinkson."

Meantime, Matheson Dodd had taken up his pen . . . laid it down . . . taken it up . . . laid it . . .

Yes, he was in a pretty feverish state, this morning. He took up his pen at last with desperate purpose, and wrote:

"DEAR MISS WING,-

- "This is one of the unfortunate letters . . ."
- "Oh, rot!" he growled. He tore it up, and recommenced:

"DEAR MISS WING,-

- "I dare not think what you might look like, after reading this. . . ."
- "Phew!" said Matheson Dodd, and tore it in little pieces. The final draft read:

"DEAR MISS WING,-

"It's no good, I love you. If there's any hope, please smile at me in the lift, then I'll know. "Fervently yours,

" MATHESON DODD."

Matheson Dodd stepped outside his office-door. In another second the lift disgorged a clerk, and Bill stood whistling, with his eyes on the far spot. "Bill," said Matheson Dodd, softly, "take this up to Miss Wing with my compliments."

"Yessir."

Matheson Dodd handed it over, blinked, then yelled, as Bill clanged his gate, "Er—no! For Heaven's sake, no!"

Bill opened the gate with a resigned air. "Whaderr we care if ar income-tax is ninepence in the pahnd," he whistled softly.

"Tell you what you might do," suggested Matheson Dodd. "See if Miss Wing is engaged."

"Yessir," said Bill, returning. "'Ster-

Inkson, sir."

"Oh," said Matheson Dodd, hollowly.
"All right."

Fortunate it was for at least two people that Bill was a perfect exponent of the process known as putting two and two together. You and I will have to drop this fiction of Bill never seeing anything, for his conduct from now on betokens that he saw the devil of a lot.

When Matheson Dodd closed his officedoor Bill's jaw dropped. He scratched the right side of it in the fashion of a man pondering weighty matters. Even his whistle was turned off for a moment, as the thoughts slowly turned over in his mind. Bill adored Miss Wing, and his affection for Matheson Dodd ran a good second.

Presently his mouth pursed again to emit the eternal tune. He closed the door of the lift with deliberation, and moved her slowly aloft. Up, and up, and up she hummed, until the top floor was reached. Then Bill, with his broadest approach to a smile, descended again, scowling at Chas. Hinkson's door as he passed it. Thus far had Bill got with his problem:

Question. "Does Matheson Dodd love Miss Wing?"

Answer. "Find out."

Q. "If he does, doesn't he stand a rattling good chance of losing her?"

A. "Not half."

"Isn't it time I took a hand?" Q. "You bet. You've been loafing." A.

And, now, noon is already far advanced. The Big Box fraternity, replete with luncheon, are filling up the Big Box once more. Miss Wing comes first, looking so sweet, so shy, so delicate, that you'd swear nothing more gross than rose-petals had passed her cherry-lips. Follows Matheson Dodd, his eye holding her, adoring her, from behind. They enter the lift almost together. Bill sees Chas. Hinkson coming up at the run, and clangs the gate briskly.

"Good afternoon, Miss Wing. It's turned out wonderful, after all. Never dream it

was February."

And she looks on him, smiles on him, hopefully. His bright orb, striving after an unabashed effect, finally wavers, and droops. "It really is gorgeous, Mr. Dodd," says she. That's about all she can say in the time, for the lift bumps to a halt, and deposits Matheson Dodd, bowing.

There is art in the management of a lift. Bill was an artist. He shot Miss Wing upwards like a bullet, and, before she could utter a word of protest, shot down again. The last two yards, he crept, and his eye flickered joyfully to Matheson Dodd. The offices in the Big Box are all glass, and Bill could see the Private Examiner snuffing up the fragrance of a flower—a modest, yellow flower—a daffodil.

Love makes a fool of the wariest mortal, and Matheson Dodd was lost in an ecstasy

of delight. The expression on his face was rapt, and beatific. "Answer to question one," thought Bill, "he does. If he ain't the slowest client I ever seen! Goin' the right way to be amongst those present at the weddin', he is."

The wonderful thing happened to Matheson Dodd on a day in March. There came a tap on his door, and, looking up, he saw through the glass the alluring features of Miss Wing. Miss Wing tapped again. He

rushed to open the door.

He had visualised her in many situations, but never, never seated in his office-chair. Miraculous! "Why, Miss Wing," he began, "this is a most unexpected pleasure! it—er—er—a beautiful afternoon?" he flushed as he realised that he had mentioned the weather to her for the third time that day.

Miss Wing couldn't have kept a little affection for the dear, foolish man out of her eyes had she tried. She laughed, out of excitement and pure joy. "Why, yes, Mr. Dodd. I do believe it is," she said, adding, "Please, I am in trouble."

Nothing could have braced Matheson Dodd as did this announcement. If he cherished one ambition above all others, it was to "take arms against a sea of troubles" in her behalf.

"Delighted," he said. "Oh, Heavens! I mean, of course, that I'm very sorry to hear it, and that I'll be delighted to help

in any way. Is it serious?"

"It's really too trifling to bother you with," returned Miss Wing. "But Bill, the liftman, was so insistent about my coming to you, that I finally gave in. It's not so serious as annoying. Things have been disappearing from my office, mysteriously. First my blotter vanished, then half a dozen perfectly new camel-hair brushes. Now I find that some boxes of drawing-pins are missing. Quite trifling things, you see really not worth worrying about. they're such useless things to steal that I'm anxious to know who stole them, and whv."

"Quite," said Matheson Dodd. "Er-

may I see your office?"

"The blotter was here, and the drawingpins here, and the brushes here," Miss Wing was saying, five minutes later. Matheson Dodd stood frowning. He looked at things, then gazed out into the corridor. Then he asked, "Do you leave your door open when you go out to lunch?" And she said yes, she did. It was a farce. Matheson Dodd

couldn't have concentrated to save his life. His eyes were alternately on the dimple at the left corner of her mouth, and a pair of indescribably tiny kid slippers which stood in a corner. As for Miss Wing, her heart seemed to have broken loose from its moorings. It was beating terrifically away up in her throat, to such an extent, indeed, that she found speech a dangerous adventure.

"I-er-have often wondered," said Matheson Dodd, heavily, "what your office

is like."

"And now," returned Miss Wing, brightly,

"you know."

"Er-yes," bleated Matheson, with a nervous laugh. "Yes. Well, I mustn't detain you. And-er-I'd lock my door in future, if I were you. Meantime-"

"Yes?" encouraged Miss Wing, presently. "I-I'll look into this affair," he stammered, tripping over the carpet. "Goodbve!"

Miss Wing sat down, and shook her head, and smiled a wry little smile. "Really,' she sighed, "he's a dear man, but, oh, so

very trying."

Matheson Dodd sat in his office, tugging at his collar. "What the devil," he asked himself, "does one say to a girl, when one-er-holds her in extremely high regard?"

"Perhaps," said Chas. Hinkson waxing poetic as he invaded the sanctum of Commercial Art with his hundred and fifty-sixth bouquet, "perhaps beauty will teach these flowers how to bloom? They are the miserable best I could get. Miss Wing, will you marry me?"

Miss Wing blushed prettily, and dabbed at her nose with an infinitesimal powder-puff. "Mr. Hinkson, I won't," she said. "Please be your usual restful self, will you?

I hate being unsettled."

The telephone bell tinkled. Miss Wing took up the receiver. "Who?" she said. "Mr. Dodd?" Lo, the blush, which had been on the point of departure, returned in all its vividness. "Oh! Yes. Yes. No, there's nothing else missing, at present. Very well. Good-bye!"

Chas. Hinkson had been watching carefully. He sat for a while tapping his finger with a pencil, looking very thoughtful. Then he arose. "Miss Wing," he said. "No. Hang it! Permission to call you Joy."

"Permission not granted," said Miss Wing, crisply. "You are becoming a nuisance."

"I'm afraid," returned Chas. Hinkson, "that I'll be more of a nuisance in a moment I'm going to ask you a very personal question. Are you in love with that detective fellow?"

Miss Wing's $_{
m chair}$ scraped "Really," she said, "you're quite intolerable. You can find your way out, can't

"Now, now," said Chas. Hinkson, seat-



"Miss Wing looked at Matheson Dodd."

yourself away. Hang it all, I can give you any mortal thing you want, within reason. And I'm ready to kneel down and —and kiss the hem of your garment, Joy. Cut it out, old girl. This nonsense with Dodd, I mean."

Miss Wing rolled little pieces of paper into hard balls, and flicked them across the desk.

"Good Heavens!" snorted Chas. Hinkson, "a detective! Why, the mutt can't detect that you're the most beautiful girl ever made! As for this little mystery of yours -these things missing—well, look at him!"

Miss Wing looked at Chas. Hinkson instead. She saw a very slick young man, with beautifully marcelled red hair, and an ostentatious watch-chain. "Mr. Hinkson," she said, "I'm not marrying anybody these days. And if you don't go away I shall begin to think you a very obnoxious person. Will you please go?"

Chas. Hinkson went. He left behind him

a very scared Miss Wing.

Miss Wing, you must understand, although not old, was not an infant, either. And she

solve this mystery of the missing drawingpins!"

Two days afterwards, at ten o'clock, when the sun had climbed to the top corner of Matheson Dodd's window, and had shot a

the sun had climbed to the top corner of Matheson Dodd's window, and had shot a brilliant beam on to the desk of that faint heart, Miss Wing knocked again on his door.

"My paper-weight, this time," she said. And Matheson Dodd gasped. She had on a new outfit—the dernier cri from one of those salons that advertise their name in tiny letters in the middle of a vast, shiny Tatler page. It was rather daringly cut both above and below, and Miss Wing crossed her unexampled limbs absently, and looked at him out of the half-eye that was peeping from under her clocke hat

at him out of the half-eye that was peeping from under her cloche hat.

"It disappeared whilst I was on the fourth

"Bill, who never saw anything, must have kept his eyes well open, for he turned the exact page to disclose a yellow daffodil. 'You dropped it in the lift, miss,' he explained, 'and I chucked it down outside 'is door,'"

was rather desperately watching the days go by, and watching her mirror for the signs of passing youth that, happily, came not to the chaste oval of her girlish features. Yes, scared was Miss Wing. She realised that, if Matheson Dodd didn't come up to the scratch very soon, there was a danger that she might succumb to the importunings of Chas. Hinkson.

Chas. Hinkson, who had a knack of sensing things, sensed this. He was thinking to himself, "Now, what can I do to show her that this fellow Dodd is a back number?" He thought for a long, long time. Then he rose up with a light in his eye. "By Jove!" he crowed, "the very thing! I'll

floor," she went on. She raged in her heart. She knew well that the battery of her seductions was in full blast. Why didn't he rise to the occasion? Why, oh why didn't a large pin come up under his chair and prick him viciously?

Matheson Dodd was thinking, "Good Heavens! She's just a child!" He had been a fool. He was a fool ever to—

"Excuse my barging in," said a voice. It was the voice of Chas. Hinkson. He rather swaggered. He looked triumphant. "Morning, Dodd," he said. "I thought you would rather like to know that I've solved the mystery of Miss Wing's missing things."

Miss Wing started, and bit her lip. Matheson Dodd flushed.

"You detectives," went on Chas. Hinkson, "are apt to surround one mystery with another. You theorise too much. I won't say that you don't get there in the end, but, whilst you are laying plans, we amateurs are laying hands on the crook. The gentleman who's been helping himself to Miss Wing's property is the liftman."

"Never!" said Miss Wing.

"Some mistake," offered Matheson Dodd. "I'd stake my soul on Bill's honesty."

"You'd lose it," sneered Chas. Hinkson. "Perhaps you'll believe me when he corroborates my statement." Chas. Hinkson stepped to the door, and called Bill. "Stop that whistling," he said, as Bill came in. Bill stopped. "Morning, miss. Morning, sir," he said, for the second time that day.

"Bill," said Miss Wing, "I'm sure there's some horrible mistake. Tell Mr. Hink-

"No mistake, miss," said Bill, pleasantly. He turned out his pockets. There was a blotter, a paper-weight, half a dozen camelhair brushes, and some drawing-pins. "There's the evidence," he said. there's the 'phone. Five-o-four-six 'll find the station." Then Bill slowly winked at Matheson Dodd.

Matheson Dodd passed a hand across his brow. "Er-will you explain, Bill?" he begged. "I-I'm more sorry than I can say to see you in a position of this sort. Bless your life, man, if you were in difficul-

ties, why on earth-

"Bein' in difficulties," put in Bill, "would I pinch them? No, sir, thanking you kindly. I'll tell you just 'ow it was. I dessay I've took liberties, but, if I 'ave, I 'ave, and there's an end of it. You know, miss," went on Bill, turning to Miss Wing, "as I recermmended you—wellnigh begged on you

-to come and see Mr. Dodd, when them things vamoosed?"

"Why, yes, Bill," said Miss Wing, mystified.

"Well," returned Bill, "that was just why I took 'em. I took 'em so's you'd come to Mr. Dodd, and sorter get to know 'im better. Sooner or later, I'd ha' found some way out, but Mr. 'Inkson 'ere kindly found one for me. I took these 'ere things 'cos I 'ad a feelin' that you ought to know what it is Mr. Dodd—all due respect—goes dotty over, in 'is spare time. You wouldn't never ha' known from 'im, seemingly. Excuse me, sir. By your leave."

With which Bill took a further liberty. He walked around to the front of Matheson Dodd's desk, opened the top drawer, and took therefrom a book. Bill, who never saw anything, must have kept his eyes well open, for he turned the exact page to disclose a yellow daffodil. "You dropped it in the lift, miss," he explained, "and I chucked it down outside is door."

Miss Wing looked at Matheson Dodd. He was perspiring profusely. His hand shook as he closed the book on his yellow flower. He was gazing at her in a scared sort of way, with a scared sort of smile that was next to neurasthenic.

Even Bill was fascinated by the transfiguration of Miss Wing. If she had looked a mere child, why, now, she was the veriest babe. It is only apt that she should close this story with a rush of colour to her damask cheeks. That, indeed, was a blush worth paying to see.

Always, it is the woman who acts in a crisis of this kind, and Miss Wing it was who broke the tension. "Bill," she said, as that gentleman hesitated with lips ready pursed for the first bar of his eternal refrain, "will you take Mr. Hinkson up in the lift?"

"Pleasure, miss," said Bill, beaming.



"ACCORDING TO PLAN

By ALEC WAUGH

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

TF I were you," said Lucius Asher, leaning familiarly across the billiard table, "I should pot the red."

Now there are times when one is grateful for advice and it would be unjust to describe Bobbie Harvey as one of those who are impervious to suggestion, but at the same time, when a man is giving you a start of a hundred in a two hundred game, and has caught you up within thirty points of home and then starts ladling out advice, as though in addition to a hundred points he could afford to hand over the benefits of his experience, and when besides all that the girl that both of you want to marry happens to be looking on, it is scarcely surprising that Bobbie's response was gruffly uncordial.

It is one thing to be beaten, but to have to be patronised as well . . .

"The cannon's an easier shot," he answered.

"Possibly, possibly," Lucius said, "but it is not too simple, and you will find the balls left very awkwardly."

From his position at the score board, Spencer Cadogan smiled quietly to himself. He knew so exactly how Bobbie must be feeling. One of the most infuriating things about young Asher's billiards was the way in which he would apply to his own play a sort of Smith-cum-Newman standard. Whereas the average club player picks up his cue with the feeling that he will be jolly grateful if he can bring off the shot immediately in front of him, Asher pretended to be thinking half a dozen strokes ahead, and the fact that in his case the assumption was not unjustified did not lessen one's irritation. The man could play.

Spencer Cadogan knew exactly how Bobbie must be feeling as he leant across the table, and even a baby could have known what

he must be feeling thirty seconds later, after he had jerked his shot, missed the cannon and left the balls in an absolute fool-proof position at the head of the table.

"172, 168, spot to play," chanted Spencer

Cadogan.

Asher made no remark. This at least, Cadogan reflected, must be said for him. He was not the sort of fellow to say, "I told you so." Indeed, when you had put all the tickets into a hat and shaken them, he did not come out too bad a chap. Not that you could expect Bobbie to see it; at any rate at the present moment, when they were both in love with the same girl. And Spencer could not help feeling a little sorry for him as Lucius, beneath Margaret Howard's admiring gaze, so manœuvred the balls that every shot he had to play should appear quite simple. Nor could Spencer help feeling just a little ashamed of himself for having suggested this billiard match, instead of leaving them to dance with the rest of Maurice's dinner-party. Bobbie was one of his oldest friends; one had no right to put one's oldest friend in that position; he should not have done it.

But curiosity was the one temptation which he had never been able to resist. could not see a dramatic situation without wanting to exploit it, and when he had realised how things were with Lucius and Margaret and Bobbie . . . no, no, it had been too good an opportunity to waste.

Steadily Lucius pushed on towards his With the score at 189 he paused and looked round at Bobbie.

"I rather think," he said, "that this is more or less how the balls were for that last shot of yours. I do not know if I shall be able to manage it, but if I do . . ."

He scarcely troubled to take aim, but the red went into the pocket without touching

621 $3 \, c$ the cushion on the way. The balls were left in a position that you could not have missed if you had been playing with a croquet mallet, and to make Bobbie's discomfiture complete, Margaret chose that precise

natured laugh. "It is always more luck than anything," he said, "when things go the way you want them to."

Which was pleasantly modest of him. But you can afford to be modest when you



moment to ask Lucius whether he had meant the balls to go that way.

"I hoped they would," he said.
"Then wasn't that," she asked, "extremely clever of you?"

He laughed: a rather jollyish, good-

are as successful as he was, and when things go the way you want them to nine times out of ten, you can leave it to others to assume a certain measure of skilled co-operation.

With unperturbed ease he ran out to Game. At the precise moment he reached his points, the telephone bell began to

"I should not wonder if that was for me," he said. "My folk said they would be calling through about this time."

He had guessed correctly.

"I suppose," said Spencer Cadogan, "you would like us to leave you to it?"

He shook his head. "My life," replied, "is barren of dark secrets," and turning away from them he embarked on one of those mystifying conversations about Dividends and Debentures which members of the Stock Exchange pretend to understand. As he replaced the receiver, his mouth was quivering with that slightly selfconscious smile that in moments of triumph none of us is able to resist.

"A satisfactory transaction?" Spencer asked.

He pouted. "There have been several worse."

"Netted a cool thousand, as they say?" "That is just about what it did come to," he replied. Then added in the manner of one to whom the loss and acquisition of a thousand pounds has become too familiar an occurrence to warrant any lengthy display of pleasure: "But it's getting late, Margaret, and Hampstead is a very long way off, and unless we join the others now, we shan't have any time to practise those new Charleston steps."

Morosely Bobbie Harvey walked after them into the large oak-floor drawing-room where the remainder of the party were

dancing to a gramophone.

If there was one thing more than another that maddened him about Asher, it was this capacity of his to make you say things that were meant as an extravagant exaggeration, only to discover them to be simple statements of facts.

"What's the good," he murmured, "of going into competition with a chap like

that? Look at him now."

And indeed they made a graceful couple. Margaret slim and supple, but with nothing of that angularity that diminishes so much modern charm; and Lucius just three inches taller, with one of those figures Savile Row thanks heaven for; and their feet moving in a perfect harmony to make that most complicated of all dances an exquisite and rhythmed thing.

"Really you dance very well," Margaret

was rather grudgingly admitting.

"Who could not, with so divine a partner?"

"Now, now, and after that promise too."

"But such a promise."

"I expect it to be kept," she retorted. "And I meant it when I said that I would not dance with you unless you did."

"That sounds as if you are never going

to dance with me again."

Her eyes were mockingly aloof.

"Which would be a pity," she remarked.
"Which would be tragic. Oh, Margaret,
Margaret," he pleaded, "I cannot help making love to you. I adore you so. won't you marry me?"

As far as it is possible to shake one's head and dance the Charleston simultaneously

Margaret Howard shook hers.

"Please, Lucius, please," she said. won't be hurried. I am not certain yet. You must not fluster me when I am learning a new step. In another second, if you go on like this, I shall be out of time."

Lugubriously from his position in the doorway Bobbie watched them pattern the floor with an elaborate elegance. " He does everything faultlessly," Bobbie grumbled, " or rather Margaret always sees him doing the things he can do faultlessly. There are probably plenty of things which he could not grapple with at all, that I can manage fairly decently; but Margaret never sees him in that sort of position. I wish she could for a change, and then she might start thinking a little more of me."

Spencer nodded his head. Bobbie was all right, of course. A dear old thing really, but even the most reckless and self-confident would have hesitated to choose Lucius for a rival. He was so young, so brilliant, so good-looking; a Brackenbury scholar who had taken a first in History on two years' reading, and on going down had abandoned scholarship for Commerce with the facility of one to whom all things come easily.

With a final crash of cymbals, an ultimate piercing wail of saxophone, the record spun into silence. From the shadowed embrasure a languid voice proclaimed its preference for "Valencia." "We have had enough," it complained, "of these exhibitionists."

Laughingly Margaret and Lucius came across towards them.

"No, no," she was saying, "this is a One-Step and I promised the next to Bobbie."

It was a vastly different business. Bobbie's dancing bore much the same relation to Asher's that a placid chat over the fire does to real conversation. It was all right in its way. It was even and it was in time. It was not the sort of dancing that is a menace to brocaded shoes. You did not find yourself wondering whether it was to be your back or shoulder that was to give way under the strain first. But if you began to fancy for a moment that it was really good, you had only to remember Asher's. In dancing, as in everything else indeed, one had only to set the two men side by side to see how irretrievably lost was the fight that Bobbie Harvey was so desperately waging.

There he was, large and genial and in his mediocre fashion tolerably efficient; the thousand-a-year man in embryo; and on the other hand was Lucius, a strident personality, wearing his success as he wore his clothes, as though they were each his native element, which possibly they were. The last person that one would have thought of choosing as a rival; and yet, and yet . . .

There might after all, Spencer Cadogan reflected, be something in Bobbie's mumbled complaint, that one met Lucius Asher always and only on his own ground, among the things that he was master of. And it might well be that he would appear in another setting, a very ordinary, perhaps even less than ordinary, person to be compared by Margaret no longer to his advantage with Bobbie Harvey. It might be that in another setting positions would be reversed completely.

Spencer Cadogan chuckled to himself. The three of them, Margaret, Lucius and Bobbie, with new conditions for them to react to. . . . It was an experiment well worth attempting.

II.

With a contented sigh Lucius Asher slid his body along the polished surface of the bath, and leaning his head backwards let the steaming and scented water creep slowly through his hair on to his forehead.

Ah, but life was good, and how extremely decent it had been of Spencer Cadogan to think of inviting him down here for this party, and to have remembered to make certain of his enjoying it by inviting Margaret as well. Six whole days: a hundred-and-forty-four hours. If he could not bring things to a head with Margaret in the course of them, he might as well retire from the competition altogether.

Not that he was going to fail. He never had failed at the things to which he had really set himself. Margaret was, he knew, with three parts of herself at any rate, in love with him, and there were no conditions more favourable for the leisured preliminaries of courtship than the atmosphere of a country house. Life in London was so breathless and so hurried. You had not the scope or freedom to set your emotional stage as you could wish it. But here . . .

As he wrapped himself round in an immense soft, flaked towel he ruminated comfortably on the long, lazy, sun-drenched hours, and the idle loitering among the wooded paths that seemed to have been designed as a screen and shelter for romance. So agreeable, indeed, these ruminations became that Lucius Asher was still in the bathroom when the grandfather clock in the hall struck eight. And in spite of a hurried dressing, he arrived in the drawing-room five minutes later than any other of Spencer's guests.

"I am afraid," his host said, "that your cocktail will be a little warm. As a consolation, let me introduce you to Mrs. Gibbons, whom you are to have the privilege of taking in to dinner."

His cocktail was certainly not cold, and though Mrs. Gibbons was unquestionably pretty, he was more than a little disappointed at not having been placed next to Margaret. Still, the fact that he had not been sitting next to her at dinner would give him a more stable excuse for passing the greater part of the evening with her, and in the meantime Mrs. Gibbons seemed likely to prove quite entertaining company.

The opening certainly was promising.

"Let us," she said as they made their way downstairs towards the dining-room, "get through as many confessions as we can before the exhilaration of that quite admirable cocktail has subsided."

"Nothing," he said, "could be more delightful."

But it would be idle to pretend that he was not surprised by the first confession that was required of him.

"Tell me," she said, "what's your handicap."

"I'm afraid," he was forced to answer, "that I have never in my life played golf."

Her eyebrows were lifted incredulously. "Not play golf?—but I expect," she added reassuringly, "that's because you find the swing puts you off your cricket."

He shook his head. "It must be a dozen years," he said, "since I held a cricket-bat. Not since I was at Rugby. In fact I used to say that getting leave off cricket was the one real inducement one had to reach the sixth."

An admission that made Mrs. Gibbons' next remark an almost despairing wail.

"Of course, if one really goes in for swimming. . . ."

He laughed at that.

"Again," he said, "I must, I am afraid, disappoint you. I am nothing of an athlete."

"Not an athlete," and the wide blue eyes grew wider in astonishment. "Then . . . then what on earth do you find to do?"

"Do? Oh, plenty of things. My life happens to be rather full. There's work and there are parties."

"Yes, yes, but exercise. What do you do about exercise? Don't you take any?"

"If three dances and one Turkish bath a —'' he began. But somehow he lacked the courage to complete the sentence. The look of undisguised perplexity on his companion's face unweaponed him. He was something to which she was unaccustomed, something she did not understand, and she was looking at him in much the same way that the first explorer must have confronted the first Malayan savage. Their conversation during the next ten minutes was awkward and disjointed. She was doing her best, he realised, to put him at his ease. But he could not deny that it was with relief that he saw the arrival of the entrée provide Mrs. Gibbons with an opportunity to turn to her other neighbour.

As she did so a smile of satisfaction spread over Spencer's face. The situation was developing as he had hoped. For the first time possibly in his life Lucius Asher was sitting awkward and silent at a dinner table, and if things should continue, as he suspected that they would continue, this scene was only the prelude to other and more considerable embarrassments.

As he looked down the long and crowded table, he felt that it would have been impossible to devise a party in which Lucius Asher could be more completely out of place. It had been worked out by an almost mathematical formula. He had made two lists. In one he had put the things at which Lucius excelled: bridge, billiards, dancing and conversation of a slightly eclectic tendency; in another, the things in which Bobbie was effective: cricket, golf, tennis, swimming; and that type of conversation that is best described as general heartiness. He had then made a list of some dozen and a half people who would either ignore or despise Asher's particular capacities and would hold Bobbie's in correspondingly high esteem. For the purpose which it had been intended the ingredients of the party could hardly have been more happily compounded.

During the remainder of the meal such remarks as Mrs. Gibbons addressed to Lucius were inspired solely by the requirements of manners, and it was with a sigh of relief that her companion drew his chair up towards the table as the women left the room.

To Lucius Asher this was, of the day's many good moments, perhaps the best. And he can have known few dinner parties at which at that moment the table did not turn distinctly towards him, as its acknowledged raconteur, to be entertained. With the supreme self-confidence of innumerable successes, he drew slowly at his cigar, bent forward in his chair, and with an elbow rested dramatically on the table: "I was reading," he said, "the other day in one of Madame de Sevigné's most gracious letters," then paused, looking round him for that stir of interest and encouragement that would assist the development of the little impromptu thesis that he had prepared with such assiduity while he had been shaving before dinner. As it was his first evening in a new house, he had been at particular pains to make the thesis worthy of his reputation. He had even gone to the trouble of working out his most telling points on paper, and a very charming and delightful thesis most undeniably it was. It belonged to the things that Lucius did faultlessly. It belonged also to the things that are destined to be undelivered. For that intimate and inclusive glance, that was to be the prelude to a dazzling exhibition of conversational fireworks, encountered instead of the intent and eager expressions which he had looked for, and to which he was accustomed, a stretch of blank and uncomprehending faces, on every one of which was written the same question: "Madame de Sevigné, but who is she, and what is she, and why should anybody want to talk about her?"

There was a chill and peculiar silence, and Lucius Asher, who was accustomed always to approval and applause, lost his head. This was something to which he was unused, something for which he was unprepared. He stammered, began a sentence, lost the thread of it, stammered, began another, abandoned it and finally collapsed into inaudibility.

To cover an awkward moment Spencer began to discuss rapidly and contentiously the prospects of Surrey against Lancashire at Old Trafford. During the half-hour or so the men sat over their cigars, Lucius did

not speak a single other word.

In spite, however, of the two quite considerable shocks that his self-confidence had sustained during dinner, he had managed to recover his assurance by the time they left the room. He might have sat, he told himself, next to an unintelligent woman and endured for half an hour the society of boorish men, but at least there was Margaret waiting for him. And it was for Margaret's sake that he had accepted this invitation. With a little smile he walked across the drawing-room floor towards her.

"What about practising that Charleston

again ?" he said.

"The Charleston," someone laughed, "and what may that be—the newest kind of cocktail?"

"It's a dance," Lucius replied.

"Oh, a dance!" and in the drawled intonation of that "Oh" was implied the infinite indifference in which its owner held all strenuous activities that were not staged in the open air; an indifference that Lucius, in his mood of not unacute self-consciousness, found infinitely galling.

"Shall we, Margaret?" he asked.

But she was not to be given an oppor-

tunity for answering.

"As a matter of fact," a young man who had just joined their group was saying, "I promised Miss Howard during dinner to show her the new grip for putting. It is quite warm outside and light enough."

"But surely," Lucius began.

There was, however, an ironic glint in the

grey-blue of Margaret's eyes.

"Another time, Lucius," she said, "I shall be delighted, but I did, I'm afraid, promise."

And before Lucius could make any protest, Margaret had been led on to the lawn outside.

Disconsolately he followed them, to listen through twenty weary minutes to the young man's elaborate explanatory instruction.

"I think," he said finally, turning towards Lucius, "that this is the best way to hold the club, don't you?"

"I don't play golf," Lucius replied

abruntly.

The young man looked at him as though he were a curious specimen out of a museum. "Oh!" he said, and returned his attention to his pupil. For another ten minutes Lucius waited. They showed no signs of coming in, and the maddening part about it all was that he could not detect in Mar-

garet's behaviour the slightest signs of any restiveness. Apparently she was enjoying her lesson, and also, he suspected, his discomfiture. Her absorption in the game was too complete to be unintentional.

With a somewhat ill-humoured grunt he turned away and walked back into the drawing-room to find in progress an animated discussion of the County Championship. Five minutes he listened to it, then felt that if something did not happen soon he would go mad.

"What about getting up a four," he said. Fifteen curiously appraising glances were

turned in his direction.

"Four?" someone asked. "What of?"
"Bridge, naturally. What about you,
sir," he said, turning towards an elderlylooking man of military appearance.

Slowly a head was shaken. "I am afraid," the old man said, "I do not play bridge. I never seem to have found time

for it."

"Nor I," murmured another of the men.
"In fact," Spencer interpolated, "I should doubt if any of us except you and me, Lucius, do play," and after a moment's pause the conversation returned to cricket.

With half his attention Lucius listened to their talk. Apparently the week was to culminate in a cricket match against the village, in which they were all displaying the greatest interest. It was an annual fixture, in which the majority of them had played for years.

"We should have won last year, if we had had Bobbie," one of them was saying. "Thank heavens he will be with us for this."

At the sound of the name Bobbie, Lucius pricked up his ears. "What Bobbie's that?" he said. "Bobbie Harvey?"

"Yes, that's it," he was told. "You

know him ? "

Lucius nodded his head gloomily. If on the top of everything else he was to have in Bobbie Harvey the constant presence of a rival, this week was not going to be by any means the sure thing he had expected. Bobbie Harvey, and in this curiously athletic atmosphere! It was really more than he had banked on.

"Let's see," someone was saying, "and who else will be on our side? You will be playing for the village, I suppose, won't

you, Spencer?"

Spencer Cadogan nodded his head. "I'm afraid," he said, "I shall be with the enemy as usual. The rest of the side—ah, well, let me see," and he began to run through a list

of names. "With Asher that makes up the side," he finished.

At the sound of his own name Lucius Asher gave a start. "What!" he exclaimed. "Me?"

"Yes, of course," Spencer answered.

"Of course you are playing."
"My dear fellow," Lucius protested, "it is quite impossible. I haven't played for ten years, and I was perfectly useless then. It is out of the question."

But his protest was cavalierly brushed

aside.

"Oh no, no, no," Spencer asserted. "You will simply have to; everybody does who is staying here."

"My dear Spencer," Lucius wailed.

At that moment Margaret came in from

"Ah, here's Margaret," Spencer cried. "Do come and help us, Margaret," he continued. "We are having such difficulty with Lucius. He says that he won't play cricket for us on Saturday."

For a moment the grey-blue of Margaret's eyes twinkled roguishly. "Not play?" she said. "Why, how absurd. He will have to; of course he must."

III.

It is extraordinary how out of place on a cricket-field a man who is unfamiliar with the game can look. It is not a question of dress or physique or size. The best-dressed and finest-looking man may seem as completely out of place as a short, squat figure in corduroys will seem in place, provided the one does not know the game and the other does. And Lucius Asher, for all that his shirt had been made in Jermyn Street, his trousers in Savile Row, and his boots in the Burlington Arcade, struck as completely incongruous a figure as he walked on to the field on the following Saturday as would a plain-clothes civilian in a rank of Guardsmen.

He did not, however, look any more out of place than he felt. This cricket match was a fitting climax to one of the wretchedest weeks that he had ever spent. It was only Margaret's presence in the house indeed that had prevented him catching the first train back to London. Never in his life had he felt so out of place. They were jolly fellows, all of them, he could see that; they had done their best to make him feel at home, but between themselves and him there was not a single taste or interest held in common. Not a single topic of conversation was introduced in which he held,

or wished to hold, any opinion whatsoever. In gloomy silence for hour after hour he had sat and listened. Nor had there been any emotional compensation.

For although Margaret's presence was the only reason for his remaining in the house an hour, her company, the one thing he would have been able to enjoy, proved to be the one thing he was given no opportunity of enjoying. From morning to night someone or other was inducing her to share some activity in which he could take no part; never for one moment was he alone with her. He had only to suggest a walk through the woods for some other member of the party to remind her of a promise to play golf or tennis or practise backward somersaults into the bathing pool.

"Am I never," he complained to her,

"to see you alone?"

The grey-blue eyes as she replied had been lit with mockery.

"We are members of a party, Lucius dear," she had said. "I must be a good guest and help make things go."

"Which seems to mean," he had grumbled, "that you are going to consider everyone

else's feelings except mine."

She had only laughed, however. "Don't be silly," she had said. "Here's Gerald come to show me that new backhand drive. You can come and watch us if you like."

And it was idle for him to pretend that she wasn't enjoying the constant spectacle of his abasement. He rather wondered, indeed, if she did not provoke these appointments that were so heavy a chain upon his freedom.

It was without exception the wretchedest week that Lucius had ever spent. In the course of five whole days he had not spent five consecutive minutes alone with Margaret. It had been an exclusively athletic party, in which only those were justified who engaged in some athletic exercise or another. They swam, they fished, they played golf, tennis and badminton; they did everything, indeed, except sit in hammocks in the shade in the intervals of placid wandering down garden paths. People seemed to sit down only when they were completely exhausted by some form of violent exertion, and the moment they ceased to be tired, they appeared to regard it as their duty to embark upon some further enterprise. Comfort was a thing nobody besides himself seemed to value in the least. It was a wretched week, and yet all the same he had not dared to break away from it.

As long as Margaret was there he must, he felt, remain with her. For there was the incessant fear that if he were once out of the way the field would be left free for Bobbie Harvey.

Bobbie Harvey, indeed, had been the most

Gerald," and Lucius was led like a small boy by the arm to the patch of ground he was to guard. Despairingly he looked up at the clock over the pavilion. Ten past two; by half-past four the innings would be over, two hours and twenty-five minutes to be



If only the week and this wretched cricket were at an end!

"Asher," Bobbie was saying, "you might go and field point, will you?"

"Where's point?" Lucius answered.

There was a smile on more than one face at this further proof of this odd creature's ignorance.

"Over there. You might show him,

lived through. It was comforting to know that there was a limit set.

For two hours and twenty-five minutes, however, life was destined to seem as unending as it was unendurable.

The agony began for Lucius with the very

first ball of the match, which Spencer, who had gone in first, cut hard into and out of his hands. It was not an easy catch. The sort of catch people are very pleased with you when you hold, and very angry with you when you drop. Lucius would not have held it once in a dozen times. And this was not that one occasion.

"Hard luck!" murmured Bobbie to the bowler as Lucius's tingling hands tossed up the ball. There was a twinkle in Spencer's eye. Things were going even better than he had hoped. The tables were being reversed now with a vengeance. He chuckled to himself as he remembered Lucius's patronising behaviour at the billiard table, and noted that Bobbie's rival, as he walked across between the overs, scarcely dared to lift his eyes from off the ground.

Worse, or from Spencer's point of view, better, was to follow. Fifteen minutes later, off a precisely similar ball, Spencer effected a precisely similar shot, and once again from tingling and clumsy hands the ball dropped with a dull thud on to the grass.

"Oh, heavens," complained the bowler, in a voice that could be heard all round the field, "can't I have somebody else to field at point?"

It was at that moment, as he saw Lucius transported in ignominy to mid-on, that inspiration descended on Spencer Cadogan: the inspiration of how, by the crowning of that ignominy, to carry his plan to its ultimate logical conclusion. The next ball was straight but very short. It was a ball that ninety-nine times in a hundred a batsman of Spencer's qualities would have hooked hard to the square-leg boundary. On this occasion, however, he turned only slightly to the left, and with all his force hit the ball straight and low at Lucius. In the condition of terror to which Lucius had been reduced, the veriest sitter could have found its way towards the carpet, and this was not by any means a sitter. That which Spencer expected, happened.

It was a fitting opening for what was to follow. During the course of the afternoon there was no place in the field, with the exception of wicket-keeper, that Lucius did not occupy, but in no place was he immune from his host's vigilance; every loose ball that was bowled was hit in his direction.

At about a quarter past four a roar of clapping from the pavilion announced that Spencer had reached his century. But long before the coming of that proud moment, all count had been lost of the number of

chances that he had given; and they had gone, every one of them, to the same man. It was, of all Lucius's performances, the most ignominious. Every time the ball was hit in his direction the villagers began to hoot and laugh. Towards the end, even his own side were beginning to regard it as a joke. When the last of Spencer's attentions went to him, he was fielding in the deep, and the bowler was so certain that he would miss it, that he shouted to mid-off, "Back the man up, he cannot be expected to throw all that way."

For two hours and a half Lucius was an object of derision and contempt; and there is nothing that a man hates more than to be made to seem ridiculous in front of the girl he hopes to marry. Disconsolately, as the innings closed, he walked towards her, but her chair, before he could reach it, was surrounded by a chattering crowd.

"Don't you worry, Miss Howard," one of them was saying, "we shall be all right, you'll see. Bobbie never gets less than a hundred on this ground. We should be absolutely on velvet if it had not been for all those catches."

Gloomily Lucius turned aside. Wherever he went he seemed to hear nothing but adulation for Bobbie. If only this wretched week would end and he could get back again to London: if only the match could be won before he went in to bat!

His prayer was not, however, to be granted, and it was of all situations the last in which he would wish to find himself, that awaited him as he stumbled down the uneven pavilion steps. He was last man in, seven runs to win were still required. At the other end Bobbie, who had played extremely well, was within three runs of his century. As he walked towards the wicket Bobbie came across to him.

"Just stick there," Bobbie said, "don't try and score. Hold your bat in front of the thing. I'll get the runs next over."

Lucius nodded his head, but Spencer, who was watching him from point, had very little doubt as to the match's outcome. He had never before seen a man so completely the prey of terror, and as Lucius licked his lips, he chuckled. Things were going to plan far better than he had dared expect. Even he, however, had scarcely hoped for so paralytic an overthrow as awaited Lucius.

The first ball was a half-volley off the wicket. Lucius lunged forward tentatively, and half hit the ball so that it trickled dejectedly towards extra cover.

"Come on," shouted Bobbie, but Lucius was so surprised at having hit the ball at all that he could only stand irresolute within

his ground.

"Run," shrieked Bobbie, "run," but although he was more than half-way down the wicket, Lucius still hesitated within his ground. By the time Bobbie realised that his partner was not coming it was too late. He turned quickly, but the ball was already half-way towards the bowler's hand. He said nothing. For one withering instant he looked Lucius in the face, then walked to the pavilion.

IV.

It was in the best of good tempers that Spencer set himself that evening to the task of mixing cocktails. Everything had gone marvellously according to plan. In the completest manner Bobbie's wish had been granted him. Margaret had been shown Lucius in a setting where his capacities were negligible, and where he could not begin to enter into competition with Bobbie. rôles of failure and success had been reversed. Margaret had been able to see quite clearly, that although there were many things Lucius could do faultlessly, there were a number of things he could not begin to do at all. remained for Spencer to devote the remainder of the evening to the glorifying of Bobbie's talents, and then leave Bobbie to make such steps as he might think fit; at any rate, they, would be starting level now.

And certainly during dinner and afterwards he played his part nobly in the enhancing for Margaret's benefit of Bobbie's reputation. Looking back at the evening afterwards, he could not remember, indeed, that they discussed any other subject. He had begun by talking about Bobbie's innings that afternoon. He had complimented him on certain strokes. He had compared them with certain other strokes in other innings. He referred to other big scores on other grounds. Whenever the conversation showed a tendency to wander away from the subject of Bobbie's achievements, he carefully drew it back.

"It is a great pity that you do not take up cricket seriously," he said. "If you did, I should not be a bit surprised if you found yourself playing for Gentlemen this year."

Elated by his own success and not uncomforted by his rival's exhibition, Bobbie was in a mood when he was inclined to agree with such an estimate of his capacities.

'The trouble is," he said, "I have not specialised. I have done too many things. I have played too much tennis and too much golf. I ought to have stuck to one of them." And he proceeded to recount an anecdote of his school-days when a member of a visiting side had said to him, "You could get an international, Harvey, at any game you chose, provided that you were content to stick to it." "But I am not sorry," Bobbie added, "that I did not take his advice; you get more fun out of life if you do not specialise. It is like cutting all the roses off a tree so as to produce one magnificent rose. It is not really worth it. It is better to have a larger show of smaller flowers." And he proceeded to develop the theme at considerable length, not unvaingloriously.

Spencer Cadogan nodded his head approvingly. "You are very wise, Bobbie," he

said. "You are very wise."

And he turned to catch Margaret's eye, so that he might reassure her of this estimate of Bobbie's worth. To his surprise, however, he found that she was not in the chair in which he had seen her on their arrival in the drawing-room, after dinner; and as he looked more carefully round the room he noticed that Lucius Asher too was missing. "Queer," he told himself, "queer." He had not seen them go.

"It's up to a fellow," Bobbie was asserting, "to get as many thrills into his life as possible. And to specialise is to decrease

the number of them."

Again Spencer nodded his head. But this time less confidently. Where were those two? It was a starlit, moon-drenched night: a dangerous sort of night to be out alone in. Had anyone else noticed them, he wondered. Bobbie should have. But Bobbie seemed to be so bemused in the afterglow of his own success that he had no eyes for anyone but himself.

Slowly the evening passed. It was not until after eleven that the drawing-room door opened and Margaret and Lucius came in together.

"Ah," he said. "At last. I was won-

dering what you were doing."

She laughed at that. A silvery, mocking laugh. "What have we been doing?" she cried. "Shall we tell them, Lucius? I think we ought. As a matter of fact," she announced solemnly, "we have been getting ourselves engaged."

V.

An hour later, when congratulations were at an end and the party was breaking up on its way to bed, Margaret came up and touched Spencer on the arm.

"I want to thank you," she said, "very,

very much."

"Thank me," he said, "what for?"

"For all this, for everything, for my happiness. If it had not been for you and for this party, I should never have got engaged to Lucius."

In dazed surprise Spencer Cadogan drew the back of his hand across his forehead.

"Never have got engaged?" he answered stupidly. "But, my dear, I do not begin to understand."

She laughed at that. "I suppose you wouldn't," she said, "but I have seen Lucius in a new light this past week."

"A nicer light?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "The light anyhow that I wanted to see him in. Up to now, you see, I have always seen Lucius when he was being successful. And I could not be certain of him; one cannot go on

being successful the whole time. I did not know what he would be like when things went wrong. I didn't know if I was just a fair-weather friend with him, or if he would still need me when things were going badly. I find," she added, "that he does."

Spencer nodded his head slowly. He felt like a man who has planted what he believes to be a crop of turnips only to discover potatoes in the spring. "I see," he said. But his curiosity was only partially satisfied. "What about Bobbie, though?" he added. I often wondered if you were not just a little in love with him."

Again she laughed. "Oh, Bobbie," she replied. "I was just rather sorry for him because he seemed to do everything so badly, and in a way I thought I might be useful to him; but I learned this afternoon that he is not the sort of person to think about anything but himself when things start going right. So you see, Spencer dear," she concluded with a smile, "I ought really to be thanking you for having shown me that as well."

Again Spencer Cadogan nodded his head. According to Plan. Ah well!



THE CLOSING YEAR.

THE dusk is long, a shriller note
The robin sounds at dawn;
In Oriental patternings
The mulberries strew the lawn;
Old pedlar Autumn cries his wares
Through every green arcade—
"Ruby, cornelian, malachite,
Amber and pearl and jade."

The fickle briony will flaunt
Her corals for a day,
Then crave a costlier ornament
And toss the chain away.
One, fleeter than the pedlar, comes—
A lover to his tryst—
To deck his bride with diamonds,
Crystal and amethyst.

A trail of scattered jewels marks
The track his feet have trod;
By hill and valley, stream and copse
Comes Winter—silver-shod—
Wide-flinging tawny tinted wraps
That slender shoulders furled,
Wreathing with frosted coronet
The white brows of the world.

LILIAN HOLMES.

THE SPEAKER: MR. DUMPHRY

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LENDON

CCASIONALLY on a fine Sunday morning in summer Mr. Ernest Dumphry, accompanied by friend, Mr. Pierce Eveleigh, would start at eleven in the morning and walk six miles to the Red Lion. There they would lunch and afterwards drink a glass of port. They would leave at three, and walk back again, when tea, hot-baths, and other restoratives would be administered to the weary athletes.

Why did they do it? The dining-room at the Red Lion was always crowded on Sunday. The luncheon was never good, and both men would have fared much better at home. The port was simply wicked.

They did it, imprimis, for the exercise. Mr. Pierce Eveleigh, who was interested in most games and played none, was yet able to propel himself under his own power. Dumphry's figure had improved, since he had taken to dancing, by rather over than under half an inch, but he was still a little anxious about it. Then again, he possessed plus fours, and though he could not wear them in the City he was by no means disposed to hide them, so to speak, under a bushel. The colour-scheme of his necktie, handkerchief, and stockings on these occasions was simply insolent, and Mr. Dumphry thoroughly enjoyed it.

So on an appointed Sunday Mr. Pierce Eveleigh walked across the road to the Rest House, the residence of Mr. Dumphry. Eveleigh brought his wife with him, for on such days the deserted wives lunched together. Eveleigh wore no covering whatever on his gaunt and Don-Quixotic head. grey flannel shirt was open at the neck. wore grey flannel trousers, and the reason why he avoided the more abbreviated garment is no business of yours.

He found Mr. Dumphry quite ready, with his flask nestling comfortably in his hip-

pocket, for wise precautions should be taken. It was still ten minutes to eleven, but when two middle-aged gentlemen start forth on strenuous exercise, slogging it for miles and miles, a preliminary glass of sherry and a biscuit are indicated. These being indicated, produced, and consumed, Mrs. Eveleigh, Mrs. Dumphry, and the two girls lined up at the front gate and watched the start of the procession.

And it was not till half the distance had been covered—a full three miles—that they paused for five minutes' rest and a slight reference to the flask. And suddenly Mr. Dumphry said:

"What would you do, Pierce, if you were elected a Member of Parliament?

Nothing had been said to lead up to the subject, but in the mind of Mr. Dumphry great ideas germinated and came to maturity with extraordinary rapidity.

"I'm not going to be," said Eveleigh.

"And if I were I should resign."

"You can't say that. We cannot tell the future. Circumstances might make you, or me, or any other resident of Tessel Road, a Member of Parliament. And if you were, what do you know of Parliamentary form and procedure?"

"Not a thing," said Pierce frankly.

" Nor do I, and I say it to my shame. are governed and we do not know how those who govern us set about it. Mind, if I succeed as I hope in establishing the Tessel Road Parliament, I shall make it my business to know. There are books on the subject and I should make them my study. I should pay frequent visits to the House of Commons. I should absorb——"

"One minute, my dear Ernest, one minute." This comes on me rather suddenly. I've never even heard of the Tessel Road Parlia-

ment. What is it?"

"At present, it isn't. You, in fact, are the first person to whom I have spoken about it. The Tessel Road Parliament will be practically a debating society of perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five members. It will include women, and it will not necessarily be restricted to actual residents in Tessel Road. The meetings will be held in the studio in my garden once a week. The whole point is that not only will the debates be conducted absolutely in accordance with the rules of Parliament, but it will also take cognisance of every detail of the etiquette of

rest would learn in the ordinary course of debate"

"And how would the members be elected?"

"I had the idea. I elect you. The two of us elect a third. Then the three elect a fourth, the four a fifth, and so on till the numbers are complete."

"And suppose I didn't want to be elected."

"That would kill the whole scheme. There would be nothing more to be said about it."

"I don't see why."



Parliament. It will, in fact, be a miniature Parliament. And as such I should think it to be absolutely certain of public recognition. It would not even surprise me if we had one or two flattering allusions to it in the House of Commons itself. You see, the idea is new."

"No, not new. It's been done. One reason why we can't do it is that nobody except yourself would take the trouble to mug up the rules and etiquette and so on"

"There would be no reason why they should. So long as I, in the position of Speaker, knew the subject thoroughly, the

"Then I'll tell you. I consider it essential that our Prime Minister should not only be able to speak well, but he would have to look the part. He would have to be a man of natural dignity and good presence. If we made some miserable-looking little squirt Prime Minister, the whole thing would become ridiculous and we should be laughed at. You are the only man I know who is suitable for the position. If you refuse I lay the whole scheme aside."

"I don't say I refuse. I shall have to think it over. We'll speak of it again," said Mr. Pierce Eveleigh. He was by no means displeased to be called a man of natural dignity and good presence; the same idea had occasionally occurred to himself.

The two walkers did not reach their objective until somewhat later than usual. To be exact it was 1.20 p.m. when they walked into the dining-room of the Red Lion. They were only just in time. There were just two vacancies at a table laid for four in the window. Mr. Dumphry and Mr. Eveleigh swiftly annexed those vacancies. The other two places were already taken by a thick-set, short, bald-headed man with tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses and a taller and younger man, rather smartly dressed, with his fair hair brushed smoothly back.

The atmosphere seemed supercharged with steam, beer, and cabbage. Three frantic waitresses rushed about, trying to do more than they could in less time than was possible. One of them was shedding hairpins, another had already dropped most of the powder from her face into the custard. How could they think of personal appearances when all round the six tables the wail of Sunday lunchers went up? "I've asked four times for a small Bass"-" Do see if you can't get me another potato, dearie "-"You may call it roly-poly, but do try to get me a little jam with it "-" Cheddar, and don't keep me waiting quite so long this time "-"Stout-and-bitter was what I said. Why don't you listen?"-" What about those biscuits?"--" Am I supposed to wait here all night for my change? " And so forth and so on.

Messrs. Eveleigh and Dumphry became strenuous. In five minutes they secured tankards of bitter. In eight minutes a flying Fury slapped two laden plates before them, said "Soupzorf-sorry" and was with difficulty detained long enough for an order to refill the aforesaid tankards.

On each plate there was a portion of integument and cartilage, anointed with a little grey and watery fluid. To this a rectangle of elderly cabbage had been added, and a large boiled potato looked up at them with black melancholy eyes. The two men simply did not care. They had walked six unaccustomed miles, and could have eaten decomposed camel without criticism. In fact, Mr. Dumphry was half-way through his portion before he remembered to help himself to mustard.

Afterwards things got better. Early lunchers drifted away and the tension was lessened. Mr. Dumphry rescued the waitress who usually attended to him on these occasions, and she had time to say that she

had known it to be a rush before, but never such an unnoly rush as it had been that day. Like as if everybody wanted everything at once, it was. However, she procured them grossly preferential treatment in the matter of the roly-poly.

"Now that we can hear ourselves speak," said Eveleigh "what about this miniature Parliament of yours? If you are to be the Speaker and I am to be the Prime Minister, who is to be the Leader of the Opposition?"

"Well," said Dumphry, "you know that house 'Catswood' in Tessel Road?"

"I should do. I designed it."

"Of course you did. Those little turrets and things. Naturally. Well, I'm told it's been bought by a man called Johnson. Strong Labour man with Communist sympathies. They say he's a bit of a bounder, but at any rate he'll be interested in politics, and he might serve our turn."

At this point the bald-headed gentleman seated at the table and his younger friend exchanged somewhat meaning glances.

"And," continued Eveleigh, "what are you going to do about reporting? Are the

proceedings to be reported?"

"I hope so," said Mr. Dumphry. "At any rate, I shall put it to our local paper, The County Record. There is the offer of the exclusive use of a column of what can hardly fail to be very interesting matter, for nothing. I don't think the editor is likely to refuse."

"Who's the editor?"

"A man called Topham. Quite a common man, I'm told, but not unkindly."

And then the bald-headed gentleman with the tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses leaned across the table.

"Before you go any further, gentlemen," he said, "perhaps it would be just as well to tell you that I am Mr. Topham, that common man, the editor of *The County Record*. I may as well introduce to you at the same time my young friend here, Mr. Johnson, the bounder who has recently purchased Catswood."

Then did the world seem to swim around Mr. Dumphry and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. It was Pierce Eveleigh who first recovered his self-possession.

"Well, Mr. Topham," said Eveleigh, "of course we regret this very much. We were not aware that we were speaking in such a way that we could be overheard, and if we had known the identity of yourself and your friend we should certainly not have said what we did. I can only offer you our apologies."

"Quite so," said Mr. Topham almost genially. "Quite so."

"And," said Mr. Dumphry, who had now recovered himself, "let me point out, Mr. Topham, that we ourselves used no expression in any way derogatory to you. I merely quoted what had been said to me. Had I ever met you before I should no doubt have known that what was told me was untrue. I hope you accept the apology."

"Certainly," said Mr. Topham. "Quite so," said Mr. Johnson.

"In that case," said Mr. Dumphry, "my friend here and I were just about to take a glass of port. I hope that you and Mr. Johnson will join us as a sign that there

is no ill feeling."

"I think," said Mr. Topham, "you should be a little more careful how you repeat these hearsay opinions. But I have already accepted the apology and it will give me much pleasure to take a glass of wine with you."

"Quite so," said Mr. Johnson.

The waitress was then called, and a decanter of the most special cat-poison was duly placed on the table and made its round.

"Well," said Mr. Topham as he sipped his wine, "there is one thing that I ought to tell you. There is not the faintest chance that The County Record would do what you suggest. There is a very great pressure on our space. Only last week we were two columns overset. The most I can say is that if you cared to pay for the shorthand note and to give us a regular order for the insertion of the stuff as advertising matter, I would do the best I could to get our manager to take it at something a little under the usual rates."

"It's very good of you, I'm sure," said Mr. Dumphry. "We should have to think about it. Of course, we had no idea of putting the report of our—er—proceedings in as an advertisement. Still, all things

considered, it's very kind of you."

"Not at all," said Mr. Topham, "not at all. After all, this meeting gives me a capital funny story to begin our column of light notes in the next issue."

"You will remember, perhaps," said Mr. Eveleigh gravely, "that there is such a

thing as the law of libel."

"Remember it, Mr. Prime Minister? I've been dodging it for years and it's not got me yet. I'm sure you must both of you see how intensely funny it is. You and the Speaker are talking freely at an hotel about what you are going to do with *The*

County Record and how you are going to make my young friend here the Leader of the Opposition, and you suddenly find that the two men seated at your table are actually the two men about whom you've been talking. I should get a perfect scream out of it. I dare say it might run to two paragraphs."

"I do hope," said Mr. Dumphry, "you will reconsider that. It might be very prejudicial to my friend here and myself."

"Not more prejudicial," said the young Communist, "than it is for us to have you describing us as bounders and cads in a public restaurant. If you ask me, I think Mr. Topham lets you off too easily."

"Mere misapprehension," said Mr. Dumphry. "You must remember that we had never had the pleasure and honour of meeting you personally and that we had simply been misled by talk we had heard. If you will promise me, Mr. Topham, that this story shall not appear in your paper, I will promise you to seek out the people from whom I heard those reports and to give them the warmest contradiction."

As a mollifying influence he circulated the

decanter once more.

"Well, I'm sorry," said Mr. Topham. "I think I've already shown you that I bear no malice. At the same time I have my duty to do. If I find, as I have found to-day, ample material for two or three good funny paragraphs, am I justified in cutting them out to oblige absolute strangers? I have a duty towards my proprietors. I must give them the best that I have, and this chance meeting with yourself and the Prime Minister is as funny a thing as I've come on for years."

"It seems funny to you," said Mr. Dumphry, "but I doubt if it would seem funny to anybody else. I think you could quite safely give us an undertaking not to mention

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"Quite impossible," said the editor. "All I can say is that I'll do what I can. Other topics may occur and it may not be necessary to relate the circumstances of our meeting. On the other hand, other topics may not, and I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you'll see that in this case I have no choice. Mr. Johnson and I must be getting on. Many thanks for your hospitality, and I will do what I can. But I should warn you not to hope too much."

The editor and Mr. Johnson left.

"I feel," said Mr. Dumphry, "that we have made a very serious mistake."

"Nothing of the kind," said Pierce Eveleigh. "The man's a mere braggart. If he

produces anything in his paper which could be taken as a description of either of us, I shall immediately 'phone my solicitors. We shall have an injunction next day and the laugh will be on the other side altogether."

"I don't know," said Mr. Dumphry dolefully. "He said he understood all about the law of libel. He might get in something which would be quite nasty for us but which we simply couldn't stop. Of course, if his report were in any way untrue, I should contradict it. I should be justified. But

They made several final decisions on the way home, and as they changed from time to time it is perhaps not worth while to recall them. But, speaking generally, it was agreed that if their identity were not disclosed they would ignore the whole thing, and if suspected would laugh it away as a coincidence. If, on the other hand, these paragraphs made them distinctly recognisable, Mr. Pierce Eveleigh would 'phone his solicitors at once. There would be an injunction, the entire issue of *The County*



you know what people are. However much you contradict, this kind of thing seems to stick to one. Long afterwards people make humorous references to it. I'm not happy about it, Pierce, and I don't pretend to be happy. Bill, waitress."

Record would be pulped, and Mr. Topham would be thrown out on to the dustbin.

So far all seemed satisfactory. And yet the men were a little uit distraught when they reached home. Mr. Dumphry, for instance, inquired if he could have his bath in his tea, meaning that he would like to take his tea in the bathroom. It kept his daughter Queenie amused for quite a long time.

And then came the awful days of waiting. The County Record could not be procured from the newsagent before the hour of 4.30 man Topham's a gentleman, and if I ever get an opportunity to say so, I shall say so."

But while Mr. Dumphry with his mind fully relieved, allowed it to turn once more to the organisation of the Tessel Road



"'Perhaps it would be just as well to tell you that I am Mr. Topham, that common man, the editor of The County Record. I may as well introduce to you at the same time my young friend here, Mr. Johnson, the bounder who has recently purchased Catswood.'"

on Friday afternoon. At 4.31 on that afternoon both Mr. Pierce Eveleigh and Mr. Dumphry possessed a copy.

Mr. Dumphry searched the column of light notes. He searched the paper throughout. He found no reference to himself or to Eveleigh at all.

"After all," he said to himself, "that

Parliament, Mr. Pierce Eveleigh was announced. He also had a copy of the paper in his hand.

"You see what they say about us?" he said

"They don't say anything," said Dumphry.

"That's where you go wrong, my friend.

Just turn to the personal advertisements on the front page."

Mr. Dumphry turned and he read as follows:

"R.L. Inn Sunday lunch. Strangers not as represented. In reality Speaker and Prime Minister of the Royal Legpullers' League."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Dumphry.

"Of course," said Mr. Eveleigh, "a possibility of this kind was always in the back of my mind. Somehow the thing didn't seem probable. One or two of the phrases used weren't quite what I should have expected."

"For that matter," said Mr. Dumphry, "I was pretty certain of it. But I thought I'd just wait and see. I take life easily.

Have a cigarette, Pierce."



WILD HEARTS.

HEAR ye the clamour of wild swans flying (Wild wings beating together)
'Twixt yellow shell-bar and brown heather,
And the dark pine-trees sighing?

Out in the blue o' the morn slow winging (Wild hearts throbbing together)

To the rippling run of the tide-way—flinging White spray over white breast-feather?

Does a chanty old ring through their calling?
(Wild cry raising together)
'Tis the creak of the oar, 'tis the sails up-hauling,
'Twixt the haven and the brown heather!

'Tis the chant of the Schooner's crew a-singing (Wild song raising together)

Over the tossing bar their boat in-bringing

From the roar of the South-East weather!

'Tis the clank of the anchor-chain 'fore they be harboured (Wild hearts dreaming together)
When the red shoal-buoy is dipping out to starboard,
'Mid the haven in the heather!

Hear ye the clamour of the wild swans flying (Wild hearts homing together)
'Twixt surf-swept bar and rain-swept heather
And the dark pine trees sighing?

Or ever in the reed-beds they be sleeping (Wild wings folded together)
May all wild hearts find shelter in God's keeping!—
While the snowflake drifts adown as white breast feather,
And the last light leaves the heather.

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

ENGLAND v. AMERICA IN ATHLETICS

A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF THE STANDARDS AND METHODS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES

By HAROLD M. ABRAHAMS

Winner of eight events for Cambridge at the University Sports: A.A.A. 100 yards and long jump champion 1924. Ex-President Cambridge University Athletic Club; Winner of the 100 metres Olympic Games, Paris, 1924.

OMPARISONS are odious, particularly from the point of view of those who come off worse when the comparison is made. Nevertheless, a little honest heart-searching even where athletics are concerned can do nobody any harm. I am not one of those pessimists who regard British supremacy in sport as a thing of the glorious past, for our excellence in every department of sport is greater than it has ever been before. But I am amazed at the innate conceit of large numbers of my fellow-countrymen who seem to imagine that the name Englishman has always been and should always be synonymous with first place where sport is involved, and are dumbfounded when they find that our apparently inviolable position of fifty years ago has been assailed by other nations, and in particular by the United States of America.

After much argument it is nearly always possible to bring it home to other Englishmen that we are no longer top-dogs. Even then, they are reluctant to indulge in any self-criticism which would disclose the fundamental reasons for such a state of affairs, but prefer to dismiss our repeated reverses with a cry of "Ah well, these Americans make a business of their sport. We play the game for the game's sake. We are the true sportsmen of the world because we do not play to win."

I want, in the course of this article, to examine the various factors which may truly be said to contribute to the athletic success of any nation. I am going to discuss athletics in the narrower sense of the word as meaning "Track and Field Events," and though I restrict my arguments within the limits of this sport because it is the branch of sport of which I have had some personal experience, I feel, nevertheless, that such deductions as are made will apply equally well to golf, to swimming, or to lawn tennis.

There are seven factors which may fairly be said to contribute to the results achieved in athletics by any nation. These are:

- (1) Climatic conditions.
- (2) Population.
- (3) Organisation.
- (4) Scientific training methods.
- (5) Finance.
- (6) Physique.
- (7) Temperament.

I propose to make my comparison between the United States and Great Britain under the above heads.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS.

In comparing the climatic conditions of the two countries, I propose to take the mean temperatures in the two countries in January and July. The mean temperature

in London for January, 1925, was 42.9°; that for July 65.7°. Both these are slightly above the average for the last thirty-five years. If we take the extreme means of the United States, that is to say the hottest and coldest mean temperatures recorded throughout the whole of America, we find that they are for January 69° in Florida and 3° in Minnesota; and for July 91° in Arizona and 60° in Maine. These American details are for the year 1909, but are described as "normal." It is further to be noted that the hottest day recorded in America to date is 134° and the coldest - 55°; our own comparative figures are 100° and -23° . Another factor of no small importance is that of rainfall. The average annual rainfall in London is about 28 inches. States of America it varies from 62 inches in Alabama to 3.1 inches in Arizona. The great variation of temperature must influence athletic performances.

Undoubtedly, too, the warm climate in the United States, especially in the far west, is more conducive to a higher standard of athletic performances than the uncertain meteorological conditions to which we in this country are subjected. This enables much better performances to be accomplished in America than in Europe. majority of world's records have been accomplished in the U.S.A. It is fair, I think, to say that a better general climate encourages people to take more interest in athletics. The Americans possess this advantage.

POPULATION.

On the simple mathematical calculation afforded by the population question the United States has about a 5 to 2 advantage. On this basis it follows that if nature distributes her gifts regularly and indiscriminately throughout the world, the Americans have five potential champions to our two. An even more important aspect of the population question is the average number of people to the square mile. In England there are an average of 701 persons to the square mile, and in Great Britain and Ireland 323; the figure for the whole of America is 24.5.

I believe that the population argument is not a very important one, still it does emphasise one fact most strenuously. have to appreciate that even if our inclination, opportunities and ability were equal to that of America, the United States would always have the 5 to 2 advantage over us. Any question, therefore, of ever

beating America in the Olympic Games (whatever such a childlike ambition may mean) should be summarily dismissed as impossible.

Organisation.

Here we alight upon one of the really crucial factors, and one which has contributed as much as any to the rapid advancement of athletic standard in the United States. Consider for a moment the average English Track season. Intercollegiate Competition at the great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge; an Intervarsity Meeting at Queen's Club; a meeting of the provincial Universities; a few County and three District Championships. The A.A.A. Championships, a couple of International meetings, and, at last, an Inter-County Relay Meeting. And thensome many hundreds of sports meetings with those abominations "Open Handicaps," ensnaring with canteens of cutlery and solid gold alberts.

By contrast the American organisation is well worth consideration. Here we find two collegiate organisations—the National Collegiate Organisation composed of 175 Colleges and Universities, and the Intercollegiate Association which has been holding Championships since 1876 and comprises 37 Colleges.

Under the former organisation there are some 11 Sectional Intercollegiate Conference Meets, 15 State Intercollegiate Meets and no less than 77 Dual Meets. At the Big Annual Meeting, 60 Colleges are represented by nearly 200 athletes, and about 40 of these Colleges score points.

The gate receipts amount to nearly £2,000. And most important of all, in every one of these contests, the dual meets included, scoring is on the point system by the first five places 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1.

At the Annual Championships of the Intercollegiate Association, there are more than 200 competitors from some 20 Universities, and again the scoring is by points.

The result of holding these huge contests and the large number of intercollegiate matches all on the team principle, is that athletics receive a tremendous fillip. keenness to get a "letter" at an American University (the American equivalent of the "Blue") is remarkable. Further, every member of the team is encouraged to try his utmost, since a fifth place may secure victory for his side. Contrast the Oxford and Cambridge Meeting in England where



Photo by] [Topical, HAROLD M. ABRAHAMS.

only the winners score. In my opinion this antiquated procedure is much to be deplored. In addition, one should mention that

In addition, one should mention that numerous indoor meets are held in the winter months, including an indoor championship.

SCIENTIFIC TRAINING METHODS.

Athletic achievement is the result of natural ability and training. Under the head of "physique" I shall tackle the question of natural ability; but it is fair

to assume that in international competition, where only those who possess the highest natural ability can succeed, pro rata for population this factor is a more or less constant one. Nature does not favour one race more than another, though of course some races undoubtedly can adapt themselves more easily than others. Certain nations may have characteristics which other nations do not possess, but speaking generally, if natural ability were the only factor of success, we should expect to find the winners of the Olympic Games reasonably distributed throughout the globe.

Modern athletic competition, however, has reached to such a standard that scientific training is really the deciding factor. It is obvious that without natural ability, scientific training will not get you far. But the essential difference between the American and English achievements is clearly brought to view when this matter of training is carefully considered. Englishman trains in a spasmodic, lighthearted, devil-may-care kind of way-"We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do" is his attitude. He will go so far as to abandon alcohol and nicotine as the more blatantly obvious forms of self-denial, and he will conduct himself with reasonableness just before a contest. Speaking generally, however, he has no use for any scientific approach to his exercise, and anything that may suggest that he is "making a business of his sport" is taboo. He will practise in a casual way, but will not spend much, if any, time in a scientific study of the event which he has taken up.

Contrast this with the American attitude. The American is determined to produce the very best result that it is humanly possible for him to produce. He leaves no stone unturned to achieve the very finest performance that can be achieved, and will consider no time wasted which is spent in the eradication of some tiny fault which is a bar to his progress.

To the Englishman this is taking the whole thing far too seriously. He cannot stand such specialisation. I have never quite understood what it is that we object to. Once grant that some training is desirable, or at the very least, allowable, and by what criterion is one to determine how much? Is three hours a week to be sanctioned, but four absolutely barred? Or what? Put concretely, the objection always seems to me to be reducible to an absurdity, but somehow the Englishman feels that

the American attitude is a wrong one. In truth, the Englishman does not care enough whether he wins or loses, and the American is often apt to care too much. "The English are splendid losers—they lose everything." Indifference to victory is all very well in its way, but when it results in defeat after defeat, one asks quite seriously, why enter for international competitions at all if you do not try all you know how to win them?

FINANCE.

It is obvious that there is more interest in athletics in America than in this country, and that there are more meetings held for the pure love of sport, and the results of which find their way into a fund for the benefit of sport. In this country the organisers of championship meetings lack funds and are consequently reluctant, and indeed unable, to take risks. Not so across the Atlantic, where the funds derived from most sports are pooled, with the result that a great deal of enterprise is possible. The large number of open meetings held in England and organised by flower-show proprietors and other similar associations do not in any useful way benefit athletes. A large amount of money has to be spent in the provision of attractive prizes and what profit there is goes to the organisers.

PHYSIQUE.

We have seen that the American athlete is far more serious over his training than is his confrère in England, but leaving the population question out of it, are the Americans possessed of better natural ability than the English? I think I can show that, if anything, the contrary is true, and indeed the fact that the English have been the pioneers of sport in the world would tend to substantiate such a contention.

Athletics may reasonably be divided under two heads—track and field events. True this division is primarily an historical or one might say geological one, but in point of fact most of the track events are natural in the sense that they can be performed without any previous knowledge or practice. The field events, on the other hand, for the most part require extensive scientific training. Further, it is to be noticed that there is a limit to the amount of training which can, with advantage, be put into training for a race; whereas, apart from the psychological factor of getting nauseated with the event, there is no limit

to the amount of study and minute practice that a field event man can indulge in. It is therefore interesting and informative to compare the performances of the two countries on track and field. I propose to take three series of statistics: the Olympic Games, the National Championships of each country, and the results of the dual meets between Oxford and Cambridge and Harvard and Yale.

In the meetings between the two great English and American Universities we can feel that we are getting a fair indication of the general state of affairs, in that we are dealing with two classes of athletes who have much the same sort of opportunity. Seven of these contests have been held in all, stretching over a period of more than a quarter of a century. Of some 37 track events, the English Universities have scored first and 23 second places; the corresponding American totals are 13 and 14. On the field, however, Oxford and Cambridge have scored but $6\frac{1}{2}$ firsts and 12 seconds, Harvard and Yale 26 firsts and 21 seconds. These figures show a marked superiority on the part of the English

fact has only secured one second place in this event.

The results of the Olympic Games contests reveal the same peculiar situation. In the whole of the Olympic Games events, Great Britain has only secured one field victory. In the first four Olympiads America won all the field events but two, and in 1924, at Paris, England obtained three victories on the track and a finalist in each track event, whilst America failed to get a finalist in two track events. On the field, however, America obtained no less than 24 finalists, Great Britain but 2. In Antwerp the U.S.A. obtained 25 finalists in the field events, and again England had but 2.

Lastly, let me take the results of the field events in an English championship meeting and in an American one. Both these meetings were held in 1926. I shall simply take the first four competitors. Any foreign or Dominion competitors in the A.A.A. Championships are excluded.

I have said enough to demonstrate that the standard of field events in this country is markedly inferior to that of the United States. Many superficial explanations are

LONG JUMP.

America. 25 ft. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 24 ft. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 23 ft. $6\frac{5}{8}$ in.; 23 ft. $3\frac{5}{8}$ in. England. 21 ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 21 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in.

HIGH JUMP.

America. 6 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 6 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 6 ft. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. England. 6 ft.; 5 ft. 10 in.; 5 ft. 10 in.; 5 ft. 10 in.

Pole Jump.

America. 13 ft.; 13 ft.; 12 ft. 6 in.; 12 ft. 6 in. England. 11 ft.; 10 ft. 6 in.; 10 ft.; 10 ft.

HOP, STEP, AND JUMP.

America. 49 ft. 4 in.; 47 ft. $5\frac{1}{4}$ in.; 46 ft. $2\frac{3}{4}$ in.; 45 ft. $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. England. 45 ft. 6 in.; 44 ft. 4 in.; 43 ft. 3 in.; 41 ft. 10 in.

PUTTING THE WEIGHT.

America. 49 ft. $10\frac{7}{8}$ in.; 48 ft. $11\frac{7}{8}$ in.; 47 ft. $9\frac{7}{8}$ in.; 46 ft. $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. England. 44 ft. 11 in.; 40 ft. $\frac{53}{4}$ in.; 38 ft. $\frac{91}{4}$ in.; 38 ft. $\frac{13}{4}$ in.

THROWING THE HAMMER.

America. 162 ft. $10\frac{1}{4}$ in.; 156 ft. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.; 156 ft. $6\frac{1}{4}$ in.; 127 ft. $8\frac{1}{2}$ in.

England. 159 ft. 6 in.; 119 ft. 4 in.; 117 ft.; 113 ft. 8 in.

THROWING THE JAVELIN.

America. 199 ft. 7 in.; 199 ft. 4 in.; 191 ft. 6\frac{1}{2} in.; 188 ft. 9 in.

England. Four competitors between 150 and 160 ft.

THROWING THE DISCUS.

America. 153 ft. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 142 ft. $3\frac{1}{4}$ in.; 138 ft. $2\frac{3}{4}$ in.; 137 ft. 5 in.

142 ft. 4 in.; 122 ft. 6 in.; two others over 110 ft.

Universities on the track and an overwhelming advantage on the part of America in the field events. America has never won the mile race in these contests, and in given, such as that there are no facilities for practising, no expert tuition and no supply of competitions. But these so-called explanations are no more than the result of the

I suggest that temperament is the factor which will account for the backwardness of the English athletes in field events.

TEMPERAMENT.

I have previously pointed out the fundamental difference between track and field events, and it follows from what I have said that to attain any degree of proficiency in any of the field events requires many months, if not years, of careful prepara-Results show that although there is but little difference between the innate capacity to excel of the Englishman and the American, over the long period of years the American has demonstrated in no uncertain manner his great superiority in the fieldevent branch of athletic sports.

The first English Championships were held in 1866, the first championships in America ten years later. If we take the corresponding results of the winners in both countries for the first ten or even twenty years, we'find that in every event there is a noticeable superiority on the part of the British performances. When, however, we come to the new century, then we find that the progress in America in all the field events has quite eclipsed such corresponding progress on the part of the Britisher.

There must be some explanation. two cars start together and one outstrips the other, there must be some reason, and the fact that some of the track and field events started together and that in England the progress in the one has been so much greater than the other, whereas in America the progress has been about the same, calls for some explanation.

I do not believe it is very far to seek, and I think the answer is temperament.

The average Englishman plays games for the love of the thing, and his desire to excel is not sufficiently strong to persuade him to make elaborate preparations in order to attain to efficiency. He will indulge in a certain small amount of training, but it is training rather of a routine nature, and he looks upon it much as he looks upon taking his breakfast, as rather a bore. He does not possess sufficient ambition in the realm of sport to enable him to get over that initial inertness which is so characteristic of his race. Hence we find that he does well at those events where the predominant factor is natural excellence. For these reasons I do not believe that we shall ever live to see a sudden vast improvement in the general standard of field events in this country. Not so in America. American is essentially deeply in earnest with everything, and no trouble is too much which will secure for him a high standard of athletic achievement. Consequently, in any sport where the fundamentals for success are a smooth co-ordination of mind and muscle-in golf, in lawn tennis, in swimming and in field athletics—we find the Americans everywhere in the forefront. I do not mean to suggest that the fact that an American wins any important event here and there is of any significance, but it is an undeniable truism that the standard of American sport is the world standard.

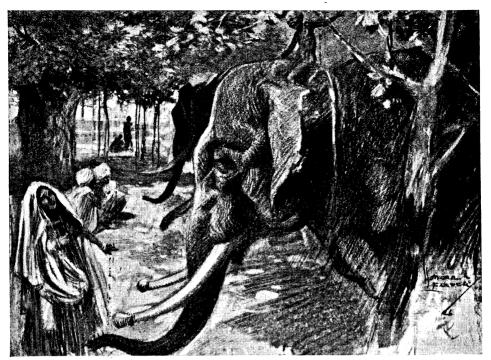
I do not attempt to offer a solution as to which attitude is right, that of the Englishman or that of the American. I merely suggest that the two attitudes exist, and will, I think, continue to exist, with the attendant results, for all time.

NOVEMBER.

OVEMBER'S skies are dull and grey; November's air blows damp and cold; Yet still the elms along the way Are carrying their crowns of gold.

Unchecked by winter's chilly breath, The robins gaily sing, and sing That resurrection follows death: That winter always ends in spring.

L. G. MOBERLY.



"He had quite made up his mind that he was big enough to ride on the elephant's neck. His parents held a different opinion, but Nawab settled matters by swinging the child up on his neck."

THE HONOUR OF THE ELEPHANT

By W. GILHESPY

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

KBAR ALI was a little, brown, helpless baby when his mother first laid him on the warm sand at the feet of Nawab, the oldest and wisest elephant in the lines at Sangapur, and went calmly off to the bazaar to buy the day's provisions, the vegetables, mutton, butter and eggs that must be brought home perfectly fresh every morning in hot countries.

She had no fears as to her baby's safety—why should she? Nawab had taken care of her baby's father and his grandfather when they were babies,—had had little children playing round his legs for more than sixty years.

He had been caught when twenty years old—when he was quite a youngster. For seventy years he had served the Indian Government in every capacity in which an elephant can be employed. He had helped to catch wild elephants by coaxing them into a huge, timber-built enclosure, where he slipped the ropes round their legs, coaxed them into submission and thrashed them when they would not heed him.

He had helped to drag the big guns at the siege of Delhi, during the awful days of the Indian Mutiny. Since then he had seen many little wars on the Indian Frontier, in Afghanistan and Burmah, where he had

carried tents and supplies or hauled the heavier guns, paying little heed to bursting shells or flying bullets.

He had hauled timber in the depths of the cool, dark forests and helped to pile it on the wharfs, lifting the great logs with his trunk and pushing them into position with his head.

He had been on tiger hunts innumerable and had never shown fear. The big scar down face and trunk told of a fight with a wounded tiger that had been impaled on those sharp tusks and trampled underfoot. The torn ear told of a similar fight with a similar ending.

And now, in his old age, he was back in the comfortable lines at Sangapur, with a little brown baby looking up at him with wondering eyes, just as the child's father and his grandfather had looked in the long ago. He broke off a branch from the tree above him and fanned the flies away till the baby's mother returned.

Little Akbar lay on his back at Nawab's feet one morning while the elephants were being loosened from the pickets to go to the river, an operation which did not concern the baby in the least. He was very busy trying to get his toe into his mouth—too busy to spare any time over such trifles as elephants and their toilets.

Now each elephant has two attendants, the mahout who has charge of the elephant and an assistant who is known as the mate. On this morning Abdullah, the mahout, was busy repairing elephant gear and had told Moosa, the mate, to take Nawab for his bath. But Nawab had no intention of leaving that baby till his mother returned, so, while the other elephants were holding out their trunks for the men to mount or lifting the boys and setting them astride their necks, he was stubbornly refusing to leave the lines.

"Come, old sleepy head," shouted the mate. Still no move. "Quickly now, or thou shalt be beaten." Then, as the animal did not move, Moosa picked up a bamboo pole and struck him on the head. Nawab seized the pole and smashed it to splinters.

"Leave the elephant alone, oh man of no understanding," called an old mahout. "Dost thou not know he is too faithful to leave his master's child?" Moosa stepped forward to lift the baby, but the big trunk put him aside.

The men and youths jeered, but the old greybeards were silent. They knew the danger of punishing an old elephant when

he knows he is in the right. Moosa knew it too, but he was too angry to care. He made another attempt to lift the baby, and the next moment was lying on his back, stunned and bruised by a blow from the elephant's trunk.

Just then the baby's mother returned and picked him up, and Nawab's lumbering gait took him down to the river at something like seven miles an hour. As he stood breast deep in the running water and squirted cooling streams over his huge body he almost forgot his anger.

But Moosa remembered that he had been bruised and humiliated; he remembered that the men had laughed at him, and he hated Nawab, as the cause of his humiliation. That, of course, was very foolish; no man can work with an elephant and hate him without the beast knowing of the hatred and its cause. And, if the man is so very, very foolish as to add a few unnecessary blows and insults, the elephant will remember and resent them all his long life.

In time little Akbar could crawl—just as far as Nawab allowed him. Then he learned to toddle and soon he was able to run about, by which time he had quite made up his mind that he was big enough to ride on the elephant's neck. His parents held a different opinion, but Nawab settled matters by swinging the child up on his neck, where he held on by the great ears and screamed with delight.

II.

By the time Akbar Ali was ten years old another little frontier war provided very hard work for a dozen staunch elephants. Only old, experienced animals were to be sent-those which could be relied on for steadiness under fire and in circumstances which would try an elephant's nerves and temper to the utmost. Twelve of the Sangapur troop were chosen and, at eighteen hours' notice, Nawab and his comrades swung out of the lines and took the road that leads to the North-West Frontier, where live the tribes who get up a little war whenever they can find or make an excuse for one, and fight among themselves at other times.

An elephant's rolling, clumsy-looking shuffle is really twice as rapid as it appears, and they travelled swiftly, for they were urgently needed. The tribesmen on the borders had destroyed the bridges as they retreated, and these had to be replaced as quickly as possible.

New bridges had been erected in the workshops in India, sent up in sections, and these sections had to be carried over the mountains by elephants. There were huge pontoons too, to replace the bridge of boats over the Swat River. These were about thirty feet in length, and trucks had been built to carry them.

The roads were merely rough tracks hewn out of the mountain-side, with sheer cliff above and a fall of hundreds of feet below. There were "hair-pin" bends and ugly corners, and only those who have seen an Indian mountain road can have any idea of the difficulties which the elephants had to face.

They balanced themselves on the edge of the precipice and, with unwearying patience and marvellous skill, worked those trucks, foot by foot, up the steep gradients. Inch by inch they coaxed them round corners where a single error of judgment would have been followed by annihilation on the rocks below—and the elephants knew it!

From dawn till dark the work went on. Two—sometimes three—elephants pulled in the chains, one pushed behind and guided the truck to right or left, seldom needing directions from the driver.

A hundred times they were on the very verge of disaster, a hundred times they escaped it by a hair's-breadth, and, even while they contemplated the awful death that had passed so close, the Jemedar's sharp command would cut across the silence like the lash of a whip, urging them to renewed effort. There are times when men and elephants would falter and fail if they had time to think of danger, and old Habbibullah, who had commanded men and elephants for nearly forty years, was too wise to let them pause.

Only he knew how near they came to failure again and again, for he alone could gauge the nerve-racking strain. None knew so well the powers of endurance of each man and beast under his charge or when the limit was nearly reached.

For the work was heavy, the danger great and the strain constant. The elephants, whose natural home is the dank, steaming forest, hated the bare, rocky mountains, with their cold, driving rains, their lack of foothold suitable for their great weight, and the absence of shelter when the thermometer stood several degrees below freezing-point and they shivered in the unaccustomed cold.

Once, on a shingly slope, the ground gave way beneath Gunga Din's great weight and he was sliding down to certain destruction on the rocks below, when Nawab's trunk gripped and held him till Junga Pershad and Sultan could come to his aid. But the four were trembling and shaken, unable to do anything except stand and shiver till the Jemedar, by sheer force of will, hustled and coaxed and bullied and shamed the mahouts and their charges to fresh endeavour.

At another time a rock fell and smashed into a thousand fragments near where Sultan was working. Some of the flying chips struck him and he wheeled in pain and terror. He would have crashed into the party below, on their narrow shelf, but Nawab trumpeted a sharp warning, stepped forward with lowered head to meet his downward rush and coaxed him back to his work.

Liberal feeding was essential, and, in addition to the ordinary ration, the elephants got an extra supply of coarse wheaten cakes or boiled rice and, what they loved best of all, a quart of rum.

Unfortunately for Moosa, he too loved rum, and, though he ought to have known the risk, he often stole some of Nawab's allowance, filling up the can with water—as if an elephant like Nawab would not know the difference!

At last the work was finished and the long homeward march began, the happy, leisurely march southwards through Rawal Pindi and the Punjab, then south-east across the Jumna. Past patches of sugar-cane, past fields of cayenne, the brilliant red pods among the green foliage shining like rubies in a heap of emeralds, while half-naked little brown children yelled at the thieving green parrots to drive them away.

HOME at last! They swung into the broad leafy avenue, wheeled to the left, formed into line like soldiers on parade and halted. Habbibullah raised his sword and, at the signal, every trunk was poised aloft. Then the old Jemedar's voice rang out:

"Now, my children, you have done well and have earned a rest. Now, my brave elephants, all together—Sa-a-a-lute!"

The sword fell and the air rang with the full, hearty, rolling, crashing salute of the elephants, a ringing burst of wild forest music, so savage and yet so thrilling, that he who has heard it once will travel very far to hear it again.

Such rejoicing among the children! Such shouts of joy when they saw the presents from that wonderful bazaar in Lahore! Such rapture among the women when they

handled the silks from Rawal Pindi, rich heavy Bokhara silk!

Such tales of the wild hills and the savage warfare, of the hairbreadth escapes! Such boasting about the provess of the And there is nothing to be compared to

And in the lines the elephants were feeding or sleeping happily. The cool, clean sand beneath their feet was very welcome after



Then the supper, the rich savoury stews of mutton and chicken, the curries that you cannot get anywhere else in this wide world just as you get them in India. The "pillau" of rice and mutton cooked together as only Indian women can cook them, followed by sweetmeats—sweetmeats made of the purest sugar and cream and butter and flavoured just like—well, just like Indian sweetmeats.

rice and a full allowance of rum and were resting contentedly.

All except Nawab. He stood motionless and hungry, and, when an elephant stands perfectly motionless, he is either ill or angry.

Abdullah was at home rejoicing over a very new baby, and Moosa had promised to

feed Nawab, instead of which he had drunk part of the rum and fallen asleep without attending to his charge.

So Nawab stood motionless, angry and hungry, while all the other elephants finished their feed and either rested or picked daintily at the piled-up sugar-cane. It was not the hunger that angered him; he could endure hunger. It was the dishonour; the memory of a thousand slights and insults awoke and filled him with a sullen rage.

At dawn he had gone. The heavy chains had been snapped asunder and Moosa, the mate, lay within the opening of the sheddead. The heavy elephant goad was clasped in his lifeless hand and no man could say how he had died. Either he had, in his drunken folly, attacked the elephant and goaded him to fury, or, hearing Nawab breaking loose, he had got to the opening just in time to be trampled as the beast

escaped. So rejoicing was turned to mourning, not only for Moosa, but Nawab as well. \mathbf{for} the order

He was eating the man's crops, and, when the owner went out to drive him away, the elephant chased him into his house, trampled his melon bed into a pulp and smashed his bullock cart into firewood.

He was seen again the following day sixty miles farther south, and then the jungle held out welcoming arms to the weary beast and, in the cool quiet of its leafy depths, gave him of its eternal peace.

The Gond hunters, who are of the forest and wise in its ways, saw the elephant often and deliberately led astray the men who came to slay him. "The sin of helping those who would destroy him shall not rest on our heads," they told each other. beast has come to the jungle for comfort and refuge, even as the weary child runs to its mother. Here let him find the peace he craves."

On the day of the tragedy Abdullah sat in his hut, a prey to grief and shame. After eighty years' service Nawab's honour was gone, and with it, according to the traditions of the mahouts, that of his driver.

For these men are bound to their elephants by very strong ties. Attendance on elephants is their inherited right and duty; any other work would be regarded by them as degradation. The true mahout will solemnly declare that his forefathers



that he was to be hunted down and shot.

blow from the elephant's trunk."

III.

Early the next morning Nawab was seen by a cultivator some twenty miles away.

were elephant drivers since men and elephants first worked together, that his earnest hope is that his sons and his sons' sons will be mahouts till men and elephants are no more. The charge of an elephant

is handed down from father to son for generations, for these animals may work till long after they are a hundred years old. When the elephant is of unusual sagacity, strength and courage, that family to whose care he is committed is in a very proud position indeed.

Presently Abdullah rose, took a long staff in his hand and set forth alone. The old mahouts watched him go on his dangerous errand and made no attempt to dissuade him. He was going to bring Nawab back—if he could. His honour would be gone, the name of his family besmirched for generations to come, if he did not make the

attempt.

They heard of him from time to time, a grim, resolute searcher, who went stead-fastly on his way through a world to which he was an utter stranger—the world of the jungle, which is a world in itself. The Gonds, who live in that world and know no other, heard his story, gave him advice and told him where Nawab had last been seen. But an elephant that travels from twenty to fifty miles in a night is not easily found in the trackless jungle.

He was absent so long that the old mahouts grew very anxious as to his safety. They knew that Abdullah was racing against time, and therein lay the danger. Many hunters were desirous of shooting the great elephant, some for the sake of his splendid tusks, some for the sake of the reward, others for the sake of sport that was not without danger, while others wished to shoot him because they really believed he was still dangerous. Certainly Abdullah had no time to lose.

On the other hand, haste might mean death. If the man discovered the elephant before his anger had time to cool, Nawab would most certainly kill him, for, when a tame elephant turns "rogue," it is always the beloved mahout who is in the most danger from his unreasoning fury.

Then, when his friends had given up hope of the man's return, he was brought home in such a weak condition that his life was despaired of. The Gonds had found him, lying helpless and in terrible agony, for he had been bitten by a poisonous snake.

Nawab had been a fugitive and an outlaw, with a price on his head, for about four months. Shooting parties had hunted him in vain and were tired of the bootless chase when word was brought in that he had been seen drinking near a village some ten miles away. Then orders were sent to have six steady elephants ready, as British officers were to hunt and kill him in the morning, if possible.

Akbar heard the ill news and, his young heart hot with rage and grief, he rushed to the house to tell his father. But the sight of Abdullah's bent figure and the lines of sorrow and suffering on his face checked the words on his lips, and he hurried to where the old mahouts smoked in grim silence.

"Give me money," he begged. "Give me money and I will repay. I dare not ask my father and the hunters—the hunters,

they will shoot Nawab."

"And what canst thou do, little one?"
"Give me money and I will buy sweetmeats for Nawab. He knows me and loved
me ere the madness came upon him. He
will come with me. Give me money and
let me go quickly."

"Thou must not go alone," said an old mahout. "I will send my grandson with thee and thou must get Habbibullah's per-

mission."

"I need no man's permission. This is a matter of my father's honour and the honour of the elephant. He is ill, therefore I, his son, take up his task—my duty and my right. If Nawab will not come quietly for me, then a thousand grandsons cannot help me. Oh, let me go—quickly!"

"He may kill thee, and then-"

"Then for me and my father and his elephant the matter is ended. Who—who will lend me money ere the shops close?"

"The child is right," said another old man.
"Nay, he is a child no longer but a man this day—a man of the elephant men in very truth. Go, son of Abdullah, take this money and go swiftly. The task is thine indeed and belongs to no other. Go, and may Allah go with thee."

It was a rough road and a dark night; the lad was weary when he reached a threshingfloor near the roadside and was told by the men who were guarding the crops that the elephant had been seen near Kummerpoor,

three miles away.

Dawn was breaking as he reached Kummerpoor and learned that the elephant had passed through a field of millet less than an hour before. Pausing only to drink the milk the kindly villagers offered, he hurried on with weary limbs, for he knew he was racing against time. The white hunters were to make an early start, and, if they found Nawab in the open, his fate was certain.

He was running a great risk and he knew it, but the knowledge counted for nothing when he saw the great elephant shuffling along. He called "Nawab, oh, Nawab, wait for me, oh, wait," but the wind carried his voice in the wrong direction and the animal shuffled along unheeding.

Akbar hurried along, but he had been walking all night; the breath came in thick, choking sobs, and his weary feet dragged heavily over the rough sun-baked clods. An elephant's leisurely roll can carry him over the ground at an amazing pace, and the boy was losing ground.

He tried to clear a narrow water-course, but his weary, aching limbs would not lift to the jump and he fell into the muddy stream. The cold bath revived him and he managed to increase his speed. Then the elephant turned to the right and disappeared into a belt of jungle. The boy's heart sank.

"Nawab, oh, Nawab," he wailed, "come to me, oh, come to me. Oh, prince of elephants, come to me or surely thou wilt

be slain!"

He heard a crashing of branches in the jungle and stumbled towards the sound. He paid no heed to the startled deer and jackals that fled before him, he scarcely noticed the peacock that whirred aloft in fear. When a huge wild boar sprang out of the thicket a few feet away he was too dazed and exhausted to be afraid.

His heart was pounding against his ribs, his lungs seemed on the point of bursting and surrounding objects danced before his eyes. Then his foot caught in a root, he sank heavily to the ground and lay still.

When he awoke five minutes afterwards—though it seemed as many hours—a long trunk was feeling him all over and trying to get at the sweetmeats in his pocket. Then he stumbled to his feet and sobbed.

"Nawab, oh, Nawab, where hast thou been these many days? Dost thou not know that my father sits at home in silent sorrow? Is not thine honour his, and thy shame his also? Yes, yes, I have sweetmeats for thee. O rogue, O wanderer! Did anyone give thee sweetmeats all these weary days?"

At the edge of the jungle Nawab lifted the boy and set him astride his neck, then, as Akbar gave the word to start, he saw the hunting party crossing the canal bridge.

Quickly he urged his charge back into the jungle and slipped to the ground, giving the command to lie down. The elephant sank to his knees and rolled over on his side just as the party came opposite.

The other elephants stopped and trumpeted shrilly and Akbar's heart seemed to stop beating when Nawab raised his trunk to reply. With all his strength the boy tried to push it down, and, though his puny efforts went for nothing, the great beast seemed to understand, heaved a sigh and lay still.

One of the officers ordered a halt and declared his intention of searching the jungle. Then the leading mahout, who had guessed the cause of the elephants' excite-

ment, came to the rescue.

"O protector of the poor," he urged, "there is not enough cover here to hide an elephant, though, doubtless, the rogue fed here in the night and now these other elephants have got his wind. Behold, the trees are shaking in that jungle beyond—yes, yes, he *must* be there; let us hasten ere he sees us."

The party was a mile away when the elephant was allowed to rise. Then the boy mounted and they set off for the Sirdar's palace.

In a hall of white marble the Sirdar of Sangapur sat on a couch covered with tiger skins while the boy squatted, native fashion, at his feet and told his story.

"Is this all true?" the ruler asked.

"Who dare lie to the king?"

"But why hast thou come to me?"

"I seek pardon for a noble beast at the hands of a noble ruler to whom all things are known. The English—what know they of elephants and their ways? Truly, Sirdar Bahadur, it was not Nawab's fault; a meaner elephant would have killed that man long ago."

"That also is true, of a truth thou hast great understanding for thy years, but pardon lies not in my hands. Nevertheless, it is a noble beast and—and—— Ho, there!

The carriage, quickly."

The general listened with grave courtesy to the Sirdar's account of what happened that morning, and then the old gentleman made his appeal for Nawab's pardon.

"British justice," he concluded, "is known and revered throughout the land, but will it be just to kill a noble animal for the fault of a drunken man? An elephant will brook toil and hardship, but not insult and dishonour. You must pardon him, General."

So Nawab was pardoned and the Sirdar, who was as generous as he was rich and powerful, gave orders that a great feast should be provided for the mahouts in honour of Nawab's safe return.

Akbar sat in the place of honour, beside the grizzled old commander, and Abdullah was happy and cheerful for the first time for many weary months.

When the feast was ended, when no one could eat another morsel, the elephants were paraded, Nawab in his old place at the head of the troop. Akbar stood alone, in front of the line, by command of the stern old Jemedar, whom children loved without fear and men and elephants obeyed without hesitation.

The commander's sword flashed aloft and,

at his command, every trunk was raised and curled back.

"Now, my children, my brave elephants, salute this brave boy, who has saved your leader from undeserved death. A boy no longer shall he be called but a mahout, a mahout of the elephants, and honoured shall he be by men and elephants alike. Now, my heroes—altogether S-A-A-A-LUTE!"

He lowered his sword with a flourish and a crashing peal, the ringing trumpet salute of the elephants, echoed and re-echoed on the still night air.



STARLINGS AT ST. PAUL'S.

THEY come from bush and berried hedge,
Their feast by God's good bounty spread;
Winging from field and heath and sedge
They gather, ere the day is dead.
What lure of home their course has led
To leave their trees for stony walls,
And seek beside the Dome their bed,
The little lodgers of St. Paul's?

They cluster on the gable edge
And quaintly perch on hand and head
Of saint with careless sacrilege,
Till every nook is tenanted.
Then on the ears of those who tread
Below, ten-thousand-throated, falls
Their hymn of praise for daily bread—
The little lodgers of St. Paul's.

And huddled there on roof and ledge,
Head under wing, their vespers said,
Leaving to-morrow to the pledge
Of Him Who them to-day has fed,
They sleep: and when the dawn is red
With day, and a new morning calls
To labours new—lo, they are fled,
The little lodgers of St. Paul's.

Entoy.

You fleeting guests, when night has sped, And London claims her busy thralls, You wisely fare afield instead; You are but lodgers of St. Paul's.

ARTHUR H. STREETEN.



"' Boab Strithers was age a carefu' man, an' a worker. A wee thing close, maybe. That's why we used tae ca' him Bawbee Boab——' 'Bawbee Boab!' her ladyship gasped."

TWIST

By VICTOR MACCLURE

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE

TEAM hooters and sirens all about the grimy town suddenly made the drab and sulphurous air more hideous with noise. Then, as suddenly, the clamour of clanging hammers, the stuttering drive of rivets, all the notes in the upper staves found surcease, leaving only the ground bass of rumbling steel rolling-mills, the roar of furnaces.

The big gates of forge and foundry began to spew out eddying furcating streams of dingy men, overall-clad, greasy of cap, their faces showing putty-coloured under the oleaginous dirt. Broad of palm and spatulate of finger, their blackened hands cunning in a veined and sinewy strength, these men both old and young carried themselves on hurrying feet with the air of self-independence that befits the worker in steel, the inheritor of Tubal Cain. Not the black oil and the red lead that besmeared them and tinged their immediate air with an odour faintly acrid, nor yet the bowed shoulders and seamed faces, the gnarled muscles of the older among them, could deprive their mass of a certain dignity, nor detract from the manliness and physical potentiality that characterised them. Their heavily shod feet rang and clattered on the paved sidewalks, or scrunched strongly in the carboniferous emulsion that bemired the granite setts of the roadway. They hurried to those

week-end relaxations which, from the days of old Rome, have been demanded by the worker. Bread and circuses. Bread; the strongly tasting, tangy, far-carried food our modern civilisation provides for the producers of its wealth. Circuses; the mock heroic contest of highly paid professional athletes, instructed pawns in a game of dividend-earning.

Gliding smoothly and silently through the press of men, there came a great limousine, gleaming of nickel and silver, spotless of enamel and upholstery. Inside sat a man and woman, husband and wife, Lord Glenor-

dain and his lady.

Glenordain to all intents and purposes owned the grimy town through which his car was gliding, for he had the controlling interest in the majority of the concerns employing its inhabitants.

He had not always been so powerful. From a mere shed over which had been painted in white letters, "Robert Struthers & Co., Engineers," this dour-looking man had built up the huge enterprise now known as "Struthers, Ltd." Of this mighty concern the stock was regarded on 'Change as almost gilt-edged. Its main plant covered acre upon acre. Through subsidiary companies it spread far and wide, like the tentacles of some giant octopus, all about the vast field of industry that had sprung up on the banks of the River Gilmour since the coming of the Age of Steam. Puddletown, Dalbridge, Coatstairs, Fairinch, Whitefields and many more; these had all been quiet villages at one time, separated by green loans from the old cathedral city, with its University placed nobly on a hill. From a humble maker of philosophical instruments in this University had originated that idea which was not only to bring gigantic growth to the city itself, but was to alter the very course of civilisation—the idea of Energy from Steam. The names of these one-time quiet villages that now, even for miles down the sullied river, were linked into

On the bridges and engine-rooms of liners and freighters brass plates carried the name of "Struthers, Ltd., Dalbridge" into the furthest bays of seven seas. On swinging cranes in distant havens, on spidery bridges flung over yawning gorges in far countries, brown men, black men, yellow men—had they the ability—could read the name of Struthers. Struthers of Puddletown,

corporate mass by leagues of dingy street; all these names and that of Struthers were

synonymous.

Struthers of Fairinch, Struthers of Coatstairs, Whitefields, Gilmourbank, Gilmourtown and London. Robert Struthers, first Lord Glenordain, Knight of this, that, and the other. Struthers for Steel! The catalogue of his enterprises and products filled many volumes. These formed an encyclopædia of engineering, and men the world over turned to the Struthers books with complete faith in the accuracy of their contents.

And yet, if one had asked any of the men who at the hooting of the sirens had filled the Dalbridge roadways whether Glenordain was a great engineer or no, the answer would have come in an ugly travesty of Lowland Scots.

"Wha? Boab Strithers! Him!"

A world of denied honour therein, for, as we shall presently see, there were some in Glenordain's employ who had worked by his side at equal pay; and these hard men who fabricate steel are not prone to admit superiority in another that, like themselves, once carried his midday meal in a can. Had one asked, for difference, if Glenordain was a great captain of industry, and had the question been understood in such a form, one might have wrung a reluctant admission, half negative. Young or old, these men for the most would have put it that Glenordain was lucky. A few, more loquacious, might have spat reflectively and gone further:

"Aye! Ower lucky!"

For a lucky man, as he rode through the press, Lord Glenordain at first sight looked unduly sullen. And for the wife of a lucky man, Lady Glenordain did not appear too joyous. Each leaned away from the other in either angle of the back seat, and stared out of opposite windows, occupied in their own thoughts. Glenordain, a heavily built man, the smooth skin of whose strongly hewn face was pale biscuit colour against his white hair, seemed to look through and beyond the crowd of workers. Being much a man himself he was glad to apprehend that air of physical potentiality which characterised the mass of them, and, as a fighter, was inclined to welcome the faint antagonism into which their self-dependence seemed to harden with the passing of his car. Hardly a man among them glanced at its occupants. Rather did they straighten, almost unconsciously, and become elaborately oblivious of the shining thing in their midst. Glenordain, indeed, sensed rather than saw the nudging one man might give another, and he knew that his title would be ignored among them. He knew to a shade the TWIST. 655

pejorative intonation that would be given his name, sotto voce, from the side of their mouths. "Boab Strithers, Mick!" "Auld Strithers, Geordie!" or, plainly, "Strithers!"

Glenordain had never been given to the obiter dicta, so common on the tongues of smaller employers of labour, to the effect that the purposes of man and master were Nor had he ever been heard to express altruistic opinions on movements for the betterment of the conditions under which labour lived and worked. He satisfied each new demand the law made in factory Acts and so forth, but fought automatically every claim under the compensation Acts where there was the smallest loophole. He adopted, where it would profit his concerns, every ameliorative idea that was likely to increase efficiency, but did not deceive himself about his motives. He frankly disliked trade unions, socialism, organised labour in every form, and rather than express any lip-service to them in public, refrained from public speech entirely. Labour, as he saw it, was the enemy of the employer, and, believing thoroughly that every conceded inch had its inevitable consequence in a demanded he conceded the $_{
m inch}$ the last moment. But Glenordain always knew beforehand when the last moment would arrive, always predetermined the exact value of his hand. When his stake was exhausted, he threw in his cards at once and held no post-mortem on the game. had neither time nor energy to spare for lost causes. He had the reputation of being quick with his concessions.

Lady Glenordain, as she passed among her husband's workmen, could summon up no liking for them. She missed the qualities in them that pleased her husband. She only saw crowds of dirty men whom she hated for their frequent troublesomeness. hated them for the power they had of making Glenordain suddenly gruff to her. outside the privacy of her own apartments, he seemed able to maintain a level sullenness of temper, in them and with her as his sole companion he could be snappy, and even violently angry, over some fresh demand by his workers. Here was the sting of it!—that the only place and person in which and before whom Robert Struthers dropped the mask of his dour imperturbability, was in her own particular rooms and before her. There were, indeed, other sources of unveiled annoyance for her husband, such as the crassness of politicians, but the chiefest was in these greasy and, to her, brutal-looking men who so openly ignored the passage of her car.

She had frequently complained to Glenor-dain about the want of respect shown for him by his men. Surely it would be simple decency in them to touch their caps when he passed! It was only among the older men, when she met them face to face, and among the clean-collared office staff, that she discovered respect even for a lady. Not, she would say untruthfully, that she complained for herself—what hurt her really was the lack of respect among them for their employer, a man who had climbed to greatness and a peerage, after the lesser dignity of a baronetcy!

At her complaint, Glenordain, who seemed to retain a queer, unreasonable respect for the very men who annoyed him so, would laugh and lapse into Scots—a practice which annoyed her.

"Touch their bunnets, quo' she!" he would chuckle grimly. "Ach, Janet—ye micht as weel expect Kiltarton Rock tae raise its lid as that deevils! A dour, soor, thrawn lot. Maybe they fear God—some o' them—but there's never a Deil's buckie among them, wumman, that fears ony o' His craiters!"

"Robert!" she would cry then. "How I wish you wouldn't use that ugly dialect!"

Glenordain sometimes passionately that her husband would retire from business. It had served its purpose as the ladder by which they had climbed to wealth and enviable prominence, and she could not see how it could raise them further. Greater honours could only come to them if Glenordain would devote himself to public service, such as lay open to his wealth and influence in the political field. The business was a drag. Often, at the height of the social season in town, they suddenly would have to hurry to the dingy provinces in order to face some business difficulty. She did not agree that her husband was too old, as he protested, to take an interest in public affairs, and he had the ability, although he disclaimed anything but a knowledge of steel. She was proud, too, of his appearance, and this greatly was the reason why she never would be left in the capital without him. She missed him too much. It delighted her to appear with him at great receptions, to have him tower, broad-shouldered and clean, beside her on the threshold of some crowded assemblyroom, and to hear their names announced.

the business.

funds or to local charities, and yet, because

of his devotion to business, they had to spend

a great deal of their time among the people

who made persistent demands of such a

It would be better, happier, to be quit of

lives there would be no opportunity for

Robert to accept the chairmanship of such

The people must think them mean.

While it commanded their

Never, at such a moment, could she forbear to glance up at him with a quick pride in the commanding personality of this man of hers. If only his distinction need not be wasted on dingy men who could not respect it-if only their lives could be spent among the great and the distinguished, and the snappishness and anger, the irritations of business, could be left behind for ever!

True, it was good on occasion to play the

a Commission as had nominally brought him his peerage. The war had created the need for that Commission, and had made his acceptance of the chairmanship compatible with his attention to business. opportunities still arose for men engaged solely in public affairs, and the next service to the nation might bring—an earldom! Lady Glenordain caught her breath at the thought as it recurred to her in the car, and at the little sigh which followed, her husband turned to her with that rare smile he kept for her alone. It was as if he understood the thoughts that had made her sigh. "Here we are, Janet," "Will you he said. step inside, or would you rather wait in the car?" "For the second time that day Lady Glenordain saw a pipe filled-but with a difference.'

great lady in the dull industrial towns, to open a bazaar, to have the wives of undermanagers and so forth fluttering around her, to charm them by gracious condescension. But even such occasions were made difficult by the attitude of Glenordain. He had a rooted objection to subscribing to church

The machine came to a stop outside the central offices of Struthers, Ltd., which were housed in a plain building of red sandstone, separated from the roadway by a plot of grass fenced by iron rails.

"I'll come with you," she replied.
The driver held open the door for them,

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and they descended. But as they were about to enter by the iron gate, a workman in grimy overalls came up to them.

"Look here, Boab Strithers," he said

angrily, without any preliminary, "— ma pay's two pound short this week!"

Glenordain peered calmly into the begrimed face.

"Oh, it's you, Wullie, is it?" he said.
"Man, I'm sorry for that—if it's due you."

"Of course it's due me—"
"Just a minute,
Wullie," Glenordain inter-

and the man caught the peak of his deep-sea cap between finger and thumb.

"Hoo are ye, ma leddy?" he murmured.

"Nice day, mem."

"How do you do, Mr. Campbell?" returned Lady Glenordain, with a stiff little nod. Then, on a sudden impulse, for which she could

nod. Then, on a sudden impulse, for which she could not account to herself, she held out her white-gloved hand.

rupted, and turned to his wife. "Lead the way, my dear," he said. "I'll follow with my old friend, Willie Campbell."

"'You think I can't fill a pipe with bogic roll?' Glenordain demanded. 'I'll show you. I handled thick twist before you were born, my lad.'"

This was in the nature of an introduction,

"I am glad to meet any old friend of Robert's," she said, with a smile.

Campbell held up a blackened palm for inspection, and in protest at the same time.

"Ach, mem! The bonny white glove!" he cried. "Ah wouldna file it!"

"It doesn't matter," she said hardily.

"It will wash!"

"Naw, naw! I winna put ma dirty claut on your bonny glove, ma leddy. But Ah tak' it real kindly, a' the same."

"Come along, then," said Glenordain suddenly. "Let's see about this pay of

yours, man."

"I was off half a day last week, true enough," Campbell explained, "because young Wullie got scaudit——"

"Your son?" asked Glenordain.

"Aye, the second youngest—Wullie. There was an accident in the boiler plant, and the steam got him in baith hands. I lost the half-day lookin' aifter him. But they've dockit me forty shillin's, an' we need the money mair than ever—noo Wullie's aff work."

"Come inside, Wullie," said Glenordain.

"I'll see to it myself."

Once in Glenordain's private room, his

lordship called up a secretary.

"Ah, Duffus," he said when the man appeared. "This is William Campbell, Number Six Fitting Shop. His pay is short this week. Tell him, Wullie."

Campbell explained at some length, and when he had finished, Glenordain gave

instructions to the secretary.

"Get the money, Duffus, from the proper quarter if you can. If you can't, and the mistake cannot be cleared up at once, get it from the cashier and charge it——"

"To your personal account, my lord?"

the secretary asked eagerly.

"Not at all!" Glenordain's reply was faintly biting. "That won't be necessary. Charge it, if the mistake cannot be put right, to the oncosts of the department employing Campbell. See to it at once."

"Very good, my lord," said the secretary

humbly, and went out.

Glenordain turned to Campbell.

"That should do it, Wullie," he said.
"Have a smoke while you are waiting. I

am sure her ladyship won't mind."

"Thank you kindly, Boab—I mean, your lordship," the man half stammered, "but Ah winna smoke. Black twist'd be a wee thing rank for the leddy. But Ah'll fill up ma pipe, onywey."

Glenordain excused himself in order to look after the business for which he had visited the office, and her ladyship was left alone with Campbell. There was an awkward enough silence between them, until Lady Glenordain broke into it with a question

"You have known my husband for a long

time, Mr. Campbell?"

"Since we were bairns thegither, ma leddy. I can mind the time when Struthers and Co. was naething but a smiddy, no' above puttin' a patch on a donkey engine for ane o' the nee'borin' fairmers. That was in Boab's faither's time. There was green fields a' roun' Dalbridge in that days. We've worked thegither on the same job mony a time, him an' me, an' his face an' hands were as dirty as onybody's in the black squad. Jings! There's a cheenge since then!"

Fascinated, Lady Glenordain watched him produce a polished tin box, a pipe, and a knife. From the tin box he took out an oily-looking twist of black tobacco, from which he began to cut thin slices, as he went on talking.

"Sir Roabert Strithers, Bart.—no, the knighthood first—an' noo he's Lord Glenor-

dain!

"Surely you will not deny that he has earned the honours?" cried she, stung by the faint tinge of sarcasm in the man's voice.

"Not a bit! Not a bit! Boab Strithers was aye a carefu' man, an' a worker. A wee thing close, maybe. That's why we used tae ca' him Bawbee Boab——"

"Bawbee Boab!" her ladyship gasped.

"Ach, aye. It was just oor wey then. Ye can afford tae laugh at it noo, ma leddy—since it has helped him tae clim'. He never looked back, Boab didna. There was nae pubs nor whippet-races for him. Then his faither dee'd, an' he managed tae borrow the money tae expand the business. He was a boss, whaur aince he'd just been ane o' oorsels. Ye ken the rest, for ye've been mairrit lang enough. Savin' here—graspin' there."

"There was ability, too!"

"Ach, aye. Ability, if ye like—o' a kind. But the chief thing an eye for the main chance, a' the same. First the business expanded and competitors crippled, then absorbed. Brown's, Mackie's, Cope an' Jack's—uhuh! Aye!"

His hard hands worked busily, shredding the tobacco between the calloused palms, while her ladyship watched the process, held by the deftness of the grimy, work-thickened fingers. She was indignant at the cool

analysis of her husband's career and character. Yet she felt it somehow was accurate—accurate as far as it went, but terribly

unjust in that it left out other factors in the making of her husband's success—factors of character. She struggled mentally to find definition for the missing factors, while the casual summary of the career went on.

"Uhuh! Cope an' Jack's—then the Paragon Brass Foun'ry. Bigger an' bigger each time, thae—thae amalgamations. An' Bawbee Boab aye on top. So they made him Lord Glenordain."

"Isn't it perhaps a little ungrateful, Mr. Campbell," her ladyship cried then, "—to sit in cool judgment of him, especially when he has just been getting money for you?"

"Getting me ma due, mem," Campbell said dryly. "There's little need for gratitude when an employer puts an injustice richt. The mistak' was nane o' ma makin', ye see. No but what Ah'm grateful enough for the ready way he found to put it straicht. Ah'll admit there's no mony men in his position wad be bothered, an' Ah'm grateful enough for that—don't mistake me, mem."

He finished filling his pipe and put it in his pocket with the box and the knife. Then he placed a hand on each knee, and smiled

at her whimsically.

"Tuts, yer ladyship!" he said. "Never you fash your heid about me no bein' awfu' set up about Lord Glenordain. Human nature is human nature, an' maybe it's just sheer envy on ma pairt. But it's no sae easy for a man that has shared his dinner piece wi' anither, tae see that ither clim' tae fame an' fortune while he himsel' is still clawin' at the lowest rungs o' the ladder. There's ae thing Ah will say for your man, mem—he's nae snob!"

"Eh? What's that, Wullie?" Glenor-dain had entered the room in time to catch

the last word or two.

"Ach, man," said Campbell easily. "Ah was just tellin' her leddyship that ye had the germ o' success in ye when we used tae ca' ye Bawbee Boab. Ye may be a hard man, Ah was sayin', but you're nae snob!"

"Hard man here—hard man there," said Glenordain, a little sourly. "Here's your

money."

"Thanks. Aw, weel, Ah'll be steppin'.

Good-bye, mem-"

"Just a minute, Wullie. Where do you live, these days?"

"Out the Broomfield Road-"

"It is on our way. We'll give you a lift," said Glenordain, "if you don't mind sitting by the driver, where the seat is of leather. You are a wee thing oily for her ladyship's upholstery."

"If that's not good o' ye, Boab!" said Campbell warmly. "Ma wife'll be anxious. Ah promised Ah'd be hame early, what wi' the boy laid up, an' a'. She'll be thinkin' by this time that Ah've dropped intae a pub."

Some devil of perversity had entered into Glenordain that afternoon, his wife thought, as she heard this arrangement made, but when the car drew up at the tenement building where Campbell lived, and her husband announced his intention of visiting the boy who had been scalded, she was too astonished even to be annoyed.

"Ach, it's ower kind o' your lordship—and your leddyship," cried the now frankly delighted Campbell. "The wife'll just gae daft wi' pride! Come in bye! Come in!"

He led the way into the dark entry of the tenement, to a door on the ground floor, and rang a furious peal on the bell. A stout, not altogether tidy woman appeared.

"Mother!" cried Campbell. "Lord and Lady Glenordain have just stepped in tae

see oor Wullie!"

Mrs. Campbell lifted her canvas apron hurriedly to her face, and as hurriedly

brought it down again.

"Guidsakes!" she gasped. "An' me in such a pickle—an' the room! Ach, weel. Your leddyship'll just have tae excuse us—an' his lordship too. Come in bye, then! Come in!"

Flustered, and still stammering excuses, she led the way through a dark lobby, hung with dingy bundles of clothing, and smelling as if the odours of years of cooking had been trapped to stagnate there. But the parlour into which the Glenordains were shown was clean enough, and the boy who had been scalded as immaculate as he might have been in a well-conducted hospital. He was sitting up in an arm-chair, wrapped in blankets, his two bandaged hands resting in his lap.

Glenordain continued to surprise his wife. He was gruffly jovial with the sufferer, accusing him of wrecking the boiler plant in order to get scalded and thus secure a holiday. The boy, who was big and manly, and distinctly good-looking, at first grinned in embarrassment, but as the steel king kept on chaffing him he gradually fell into fits of giggling. It astonished Lady Glenordain how much her husband knew of local affairs, how intimate he was with the capabilities and composition of the district football team. He discussed individual players with the boy, arguing with him, until he had him chattering freely.

"Ach, you'll admit Simpson's no good as a

back, sir?" said the boy.

"Back!" Glenordain agreed contemptuously. "He wouldn't make a back to a fancy waistcoat!"

The boy guffawed delightedly over this well-worn jibe which seemed fresh on the

lips of the great man.

"All the same," he said sorrowfully, "I wouldn't mind being in the grandstand this afternoon, even wi' Simpson in the back line. I get fed-up sitting here all day, I can tell you."

"It must be wearisome," said Glenordain. "Your hands won't be of much use to

you?"

"I can't wash my own face or even feed myself," the boy replied ruefully. "Mother has to do everything for me. I can't hold a cigarette, though I can just manage a pipe. The trouble is that I can't fill it, or light it."

"Do you want a pipe now?" asked Glenordain. "I'll fill it for you."

"It's thick black tobacco I have," the boy smiled.

Campbell, who had managed to wash in the meantime, intervened.

"I'll fill it for you, son," he said.

"You think I can't fill a pipe with bogie roll?" Glenordain demanded. "I'll show you. I handled thick twist before you were

born, my lad."

For the second time that day Lady Glenordain saw a pipe filled—but with a difference. She saw the big white hands that she secretly adored, so beautifully kept they were, slice and shred the oily tobacco with all the ease, and more, that the grimy fingers of Campbell had shown. But, where in the blackened hands the coarse tobacco, the stained knife and the pipe had looked natural enough and seemly, against the soft skin of these strong hands their incongruity was nearly indecent. The very deftness was an outrage. There was, for her, an indescribable something in it, almost a pathos, that gripped her throat.

"There!" said Glenordain, holding out the pipe. "If that doesn't draw, I'll be

inclined to eat it."

"Naw," chuckled Campbell. "Ye havena lost the knack o't!"

At that moment Lady Glenordain rose from her chair hurriedly in a kind of panic. The garish room, with its wool mats, its horsehair, its ornaments with pendent lustres, oppressed her. She felt she could not bear it a moment longer. She wanted to escape into the open air. Most of all she wanted to get away from the spectacle of the complacency Glenordain was showing with every new-or old-trick he discovered he had in common with the Campbells. She suppressed a desire to scream.

"I did not know Lord Glenordain was so clever," she forced herself to say steadily. "He is full of surprises. Good-bye, Mr. Willie. I hope you will soon be all right again. Good-bye, Mrs. Campbell. Good-

bye, Mr. Campbell——'

"Good-bye, Lady Glenordain," Campbell. "Ma hands are clean this time." But the grip that almost drove her rings into her fingers soiled her glove, in spite of

his claim.

"Don't you bother yourself about anything Ah said in the office, yonder," the man said quietly. "Ah have nae richt tae judge onybody. If Ah had his qualities, Ah'd be where he is, very likely. But whatever his qualities, mind this-your husband is nae snob, and—he's a man!"

Mrs. Campbell broke in, fluttering: "It's real kind o' you and his lordship tae come an' see the boy. This is the first time Wullie has laughed since he was scaudit. Lord Glenordain should a' been a doctor!"

Lady Glenordain, murmuring inarticulately, hurried to the door. Behind her, she heard her husband fling a final piece of banter at the laughing boy, and she heard the harsh joviality of his good-bye to Campbell and the mother. She almost scurried down the entry into the daylight, and it was with a sense of enormous relief that she found herself in the corner of the car.

Glenordain took his seat beside her, with a final wave to the Campbells, now out on the pavement, and the car slid forward.

"We shall be late for lunch—with all this nonsense," he said grumpily. He settled further into the corner, and relapsed into silence.

In a little he fell to twiddling his fingers as in discomfort, and then produced a handkerchief. With this he rubbed his palms vigorously, sniffing them now and then, until satisfied that the offence was removed as much as it might be without soap and water. Then the hands fell quiescent into his lap, the right clasping the left wrist strongly, and the fingers of the free hand still faintly twiddling. She wished that he would put on his gloves, for while the white hands were exposed she thought she would still see them handling a twist of coarse tobacco and a stained knife. She closed her eyes, but could not be rid of the memory—they had been so deft, with the

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deftness that had been gained by old practice and had never been lost.

Had they been engrained in the old days, those perfect hands—could the finger-nails ever have been cracked and ribbed and black, the skin calloused and coarse? In those early days, after a week away from work, would his eyelids still have retained that trace of black grime, such as was to be seen close to the lashes of the handsome lad they had just left?

But for the accident of his father's early death, would she have been attracted to him at the evening school, where he had been studying engineering and she book-keeping?

In her corner of the car Lady Glenordain admitted to herself what she had long assigned to the limbo of things better forgotten: that she was a woman of the people, even as he was a man of the people. And her thoughts travelled back to the evening classes, where a tall young man in grey stood out so clearly, by sheer cleanliness, among the other pupils, so dingy of complexion and stained of hand. Remembering, too, a fairhaired youngster of that time—a youngster not unlike young Campbell and with the same smutted lashes—who had smiled at her, and who certainly would have attracted her had not Robert Struthers monopolised her so masterfully, she admitted that the marks of the workman did not offend her as a girl of eighteen.

If, then, she had not encountered Robert Struthers; if he had not picked up the satchel of books she had dropped in the school porch, she might have become the wife of a workman, and got past the fiftieth year of her age in a tenement flat like Mrs. Campbell. With the years of comfort and luxury behind her, she shuddered to think how slight the accidents were by which fate had saved her from that cramped existence and the undeveloped taste that found expression in lustre ornaments and crêped paper.

She loved Robert Struthers. She had loved him from the moment in the school porch when he had picked up her satchel. Had his fingers been engrained with oil, his eyelids smeared with carbon, she would still have loved him. She knew it.

So it arrived that, apart from the embryo business left him by his father, the chances which had brought her her various houses, her cars and horses, her comforts and her developed tastes, were accidental in the composition of Struthers himself. What gifts had Nature bestowed on him, what traits, that had made him a master among men? Had

there been much difference between Willie Campbell, who smoked black twist and carried his dinner-pail, and Bawbee Bob, who did the same? Bawbee Bob! Was that—the closeness which had brought her husband the early nickname—was that the quality, as Campbell had hinted, that had raised him? Was that the secret of his absorption of so many rival firms? Was there a grasping spirit behind his steady refusal to subscribe to church and charity funds? As she pondered the question, there flashed to her memory his answer to the secretary about accounting for the money found for Campbell, the slight acridity with which he had met the suggestion that the sum should be entered against his personal account.

"What difference did it make, Robert," she suddenly asked aloud, "whether the money for Campbell went into your personal account or—or——?"

"Or against the oncosts of the department employing him?" Glenordain came out of a reverie to finish for her.

"Yes. Since, you being the owner, it probably would come to the same thing in the end?"

"Not at all," he replied smoothly. "It wouldn't come to the same thing in the end. I am only part owner. You forget the shareholders. Charged against the department, the loss, if any, is spread over the total number participating in the profits—not on me alone, my dear."

"I see," she said quietly. So he still was Bawbee Bob!

But, she argued in a sort of panic, mere shrewdness over money could never have raised a man to such a position as that held by Glenordain. There must be other qualities, the qualities she had tried to define mentally when listening to Campbell qualities more admirable than—than thrifti-There must have been the ability to conceive and direct big operations, foresight, the capacity for invention. Invention of what? In the thirty odd years of their life together she could remember several whispered charges against him of having picked the brains of smaller men, of having seized their inventions and turned them to his own Then there was that accusation in the Socialist paper against the firm—something about thousands of tons of scrap steel appropriated during the war-something about lost invoices. Oh, no, no!—the cry almost became articulate—it was more than mere acquisitiveness, more than mere cunning! How admirable he was, how strong,

how upright and clean-looking, and straight of glance. Angry sometimes, and snappy, but only as a noble creature—as even the lion—might be irritated. Not mere acquisitiveness. Not mere cunning!

As the cry went up in her heart, she heard her husband begin to speak from the depth

of his corner.

"That sort of thing," he was saying, "—the way I looked after Campbell's grievance—it pays. The men like to feel that they have only to appeal to Cæsar to have things put right. And Campbell has some influence among the men."

" Has he?"

Not mere cunning, she prayed in her heart—a master had to think of little things!

"Yes. And lately there have been symp-

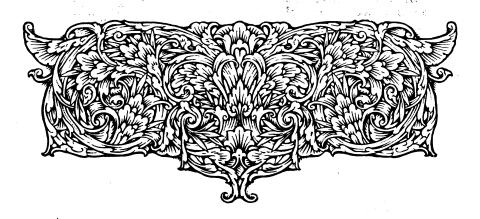
toms of trouble brewing." He laughed sourly.

There was a long pause before he spoke

"Who knows," he half grunted, "but that the filling of a boy's pipe with thick twist might send the trouble up in smoke?"

The back of Lady Glenordain's gloved hand pressed hard enough against her lips as to hurt. Then the hand dropped into her lap, for Glenordain was suddenly chuckling, and the sound held a world of warmth.

"Aye," he chuckled, and for once the Doric was pleasing to her. "They're dour, thrawn deevils, are the men—but, somehow, the mair Ah fecht wi' them, the mair Ah like them! They're a human lot, Janet woman!"



NO RETURN.

MY heart was dull as the drooping autumn sky;

No life-pulse seemed to stir in the old, old earth.

I will turn me back, I said, to the ways that lie

By singing streams in the land where I had birth:

I shall see the clean-limbed trees and the osier-beds, And the village nestled warm in the sheltered vale; I shall see the church and the inn, and wise, grey heads Nodding at night over pipes and homely ale:

And I shall smell wood-smoke, and watch the logs
Redden at heart, and flicker, and crumble slow;
And, stretched at ease by the hearth, will lie two old dogs,
Sons of the valiant breed I used to know. . . .

Then one who had passed that way said: Nay, my friend, Why take the backward road on a weary quest? For you would find, at the barren journey's end, Only a shattered dream and an empty nest.

C. KENNETT BURROW.



"Callendar, his back turned from his friend, took the picture with a set face.

his brain swam as he looked at it, intently."

THE FLAW

By MAY BATEMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

REMORSEFULLY, Callendar thought of Stanmer, as Verena's chance word recalled him. In three days' time he was due to arrive here in Paris, and Callendar had scarcely given him a thought since that night a week ago when he drove to the small hotel near the Rue du Pélican which had been chosen to suit Stanmer's purse. For himself, of course, expense didn't count; in the circumstances, it needn't for Stanmer. But Stanmer was proud; wouldn't take anything, even from

his best friend. Exploited as he had been for years past, that was a new experience for Callendar.

Slight sunstroke wasn't serious, of course. Dick had work to do in Italy, too; was probably engaged upon it at this very moment. Still, but for Verena Stair, Callendar would have returned by the next train to look after his friend. One didn't desert a pal like Stanmer for nothing. White all through, Stanmer; the kind of man whose word you would take against—say—cir-

cumstantial evidence. Callendar had tested his friend's fealty in fair weather and foul, at work and play; on service; at home and abroad. What he said, went—with anyone who knew him. He was a psychologist by bent; a writer of fiction from necessity, whose work took him into innumerable odd places, and forced him to mix with innumerable odd characters. Long, lean, alert, he acted with incredible speed, mentally and physically. All over the place, Stanmer, in with all manner of folk; royalties and crooks; politicians and ecclesiastics. He looked at you with seeming indifference; analysed you correctly; put you on a shelf in his mind, when he met you for the first time; shut the door on you; dragged you out, fresh as paint, at the critical moment.

Callendar foresaw Stanmer's when he did eventually turn up. thing's happened !-You're in love!" swiftly as that. . . . He turned, with the magic of the truth strong upon him, to

Verena.

He had brought her protesting here tonight, to dine with him at the Prince Serge Hotel in the Champs Elysées. Little as she knew of Parisian life, bless her, even she had heard it called the last word in expansive luxury. His look, brooding upon her unconsciousness of its significance, or happy acceptation, he did not know which, yetsaw how the contrast in the setting of the scene enhanced the delicacy of her beauty. Pale, slim, dark-eyed, with a small flowerface framed in hair so fine that it might just have been spun by a silkworm, sheathed rather than dressed in green georgette, a simple frock which she had made herself, she looked just like some Fra Angelico angel. Having come lately from Florence, and San Marco, he was in a position to judge. Amongst the other lovely girls and women here, all so much better gowned than she, and, naturally, more "finished," she more than held her own. Infatuation? She was what he wanted, anyway. He looked round the crowded terrace. Gesture —pose—consciousness of self—over-elaboration—what parts they played in most women's get-up! A man needed air and space after an hour or so of their savour. "I" seemed to be the only letter of a modern woman's alphabet which you could count upon as being constantly in use.

He broke in upon her smile of rapt content. "Glad that chance brought us together, and so here?"

"Chance!" she said and left it so-Verena's way. Then, rather lower, but quite clearly, and unafraid, "Spiritual-

engineering, I should call it."

'No petits fours? Come now—this one, and that." He liked to see the childish way she took them, afraid of greediness. saw you as I drove up to the hotel, that first night, you know. You wore your dark blue frock with a touch of emerald green at the neck. And you crossed to the lift just as I fixed things up with the concierge. I made a dash for it, and asked if you'd mind making room for me, just when you had

your hand on the push, and so—
"We stuck half-way." She blushed like a child, reminded of yesterday's fault. "I can't think how it happened. I'd been up scores of times, and I even took the James Lee Crofts with me safely twice before they left Paris. You were good! Of course, the accident couldn't have happened at a worse time than at night, with half the electricians off duty or sent out on other jobs. You never said one word of reproach during those long three hours that we were locked up in that terrible little cage, with the smell of dinner mounting all the time, and people staring. . . . Poor you! What a nightmare! It was rather nightmare-ish too, the way I talked—pouring out stories about myself like that. . . . I suppose it was everything being so unreal that made me. . . . It was like a scene in a play—and one wasn't oneself. . . . Most people at the Hotel du Souris come and go so quickly too. Very few stay a week and more, like you. I may have thought of that. No, I didn't really think of anything except just -being able to talk at last, and finding somebody who didn't mind listening and was sympathetic."

He liked the boyish way she threw her head back; the level look she met your eyes with; the swift virginal recoil with which she turned away when you-showed too much what you felt, perhaps, in spite of all your vaunted self-control. He liked her gallantry. Her story, told by any woman, would have touched him; but the quiver of her individual mouth stabbed him like a wound. Yet her story wasn't, he supposed, uncommon, granted the changed conditions of the world. Brought up, at once as a nomad and an heiress, travelling about from place to place in Europe with her father, who had never been able to settle down since his wife's death a year after Verena's birth, she had had a life of

romance and adventure with every wish fulfilled; nature and art for friends, and a host of charming acquaintances to play with, when wanted, birds of passage like themselves. Came disaster. Her openhanded father's death by drowning, in the Lake of Orta; Verena unexpectedly left, without a penny in the world. Disillusion? Those fiery wings passed her by, unscathed.The child was grateful! Grateful to hotel-managers who organised collections at Stresa and other places where the Stairs were known, to give "Mees Stair" a start. (After all, it was speculation in foreign bonds which had ruined "il signore"; they knew what it meant to suffer from the fall in lire.) Grateful to the British Consul who, Callendar secretly thought, had not done much after all, in just "seeing to" Charles Stair's unhappy affairs, and getting his orphan daughter a "job" with Americans to whom she was to act as guide. interpreter, secretary, companion, social supervisor and superior maid and dressmaker. Grateful to the James Lee Crofts for giving her bed, board and a meagre pittance, and making themselves responsible for her expenses for three weeks, while they visited acquaintances in London, a place where people talked what to them was, or ought to be, the universal language.

"I don't think, you know, that those American friends of yours ought to have left you stranded alone in an hotel like this, to face all the business affairs in connection

with your second loss."

She flared up. "They're the kindest people—simple, good. They had to go to their friends. It was their only chance of seeing them before they sailed. You can't expect a paid companion to be treated just like a daughter of the house. Don't you realise that I'm doing nothing for them, all these weeks—except just a little sewing for dear Mrs. Croft, and some stray secretarial arrears? They might just have dismissed me, and where should I have been then? It wasn't as if I had money behind me—or even friends who could help. We never did really make friends with rich people, even in old days. Father used to say he didn't like the smell of money. That was why he spent so much on others that nothing was left at the last. Our friends were nearly all poor people like you."

(A relief to find somebody at last who didn't know what the name of James Callendar stood for. He had always belonged to the rare shy order of millionairesinwardly ashamed of having made a fortune when many better men than he had failed to pull off even a living wage.)

"Let's go into the garden. There's a shaded spot there, away from the glare, under the trees. We can watch the world go by—and laugh at it. No liqueur? Bring one Grand Marnier, please, garçon, with the two special coffees.'

She whispered, anxiously: "It's awfully rude of me. But you're a stranger. heard a lady complain the other night at the Souris, that they had charged her ten francs a cup for 'special coffee' here!"

He reassured her, gravely. "I've enough to pay. And it's a feature of the menu which we really should not miss."

The pale electric light of the swinging glass roses that were intermingled with real roses in the pergola under which they sat, presently, accentuated the clear pallor of her face. He looked at her little sensitive hand; he had never thought anything so frail could hold his heart. The gold and amber of the decorations in the restaurant, the bright flashes of women's gowns, the black and white splashes of men's dresssuits and waistcoats, the glow of silver and baskets of vivid flowers and fruits-all seemed spectacular, remote. Even the lights beyond, in the Champs Elysées; the echoing clink of glasses; the hum of automobiles darting into mystery, lithe whippets of the night. An abyss between such worlds and theirs, and so soft the shining of her eyes that you might almost have thought she too heard voices, like St. Joan. Sanctuary here; peace;—if only—only you could curb that beating of your pulses and keep in check passionate words which might so easily defeat themselves. . . .

"I told you only a few bare facts about the loss of my pearls. Do you really want to hear? They were mother's; old family ones. She was the last of her race, you know; quite a remote connection came into the property when Grandfather died. They were pink pearls; exquisite. Father gave them to me on my sixteenth birthday; I always wore them, afterwards. Just the one string—too large for the average person to believe that they were real. That was my safeguard, I suppose. Father paid an enormous insurance on them. I couldn't pay anything at all, of course. I asked what the lowest premium would be at half a dozen offices."

She stopped short. "I loved my pearls

... much too much, I suppose. When we first came into the Bay at Capetown, at dawn, the under-curl of the waves reminded me of their colour. They were worth a fortune. Enough to set me up for life, of course. Knowing that, I did wrong. I let money be collected for me with real pearls hidden under my black frock. Honestly, they seemed so much a part of Mother and me that I never even dreamed of selling them."

She took up the thread of her story after a little pause. She was well in the shadow now, and he could only tell how the story affected her by the tension of her closed fingers. Except it broke, her voice was rigidly non-committal. "They were lostor stolen—one hot night. You remember how suffocatingly warm it was this June. We dined at Henriette's, in the Rue Léopold Robert, and went on to the Ambassadeurs but came out before the show was finished. None of us liked it, much. We walked down the Champs Elysées, over there under the chestnuts, and crossed to this side near the Etoile. Mr. Lee Croft suddenly thought of the Bois de Boulogne and the Cascade. We took another taxi and drove there. It got hotter and hotter. There were heaps of people. Blanche thought that it would be nice to walk about a little before going back. We didn't know we oughtn't to go far. Those dusky paths looked and were cooler. . . . Suddenly we met running figures, two young English boys with wounded hands, who said they'd been attacked by somebody under the trees, out to rob them. said he fought them like a lunatic when they struggled, a dreadful apache sort of man, with a knife—but the boys were both football players, and they held their own. He got away, though. We raced back together to the Cascade for help, and to communicate with the police. There was a tremendous hue and cry. Everybody clustered round us, when we arrived. thought at first that we had been attacked too. We didn't get back till late, though we slipped off as soon as possible. We took another taxi. And just as we were going up to bed, Blanche—Mrs. Lee Croft—said, 'Why, child, wherever are your pretty beads?'"

"She didn't know that they were real pearls?"

"Not till then. They looked too good, you see. That's all."

"You informed the police at once?"

"We 'phoned, then and there. From the

Continental, where we were staying. The Lee Crofts were dreadfully upset. They had to leave two days later, you see. They aren't really wealthy, but they offered fifty pounds more on to my reward of ten pounds, which, given the present rate of exchange, sounded a lot. Ten pounds was all I could give. I get a pound a week, you see, and board and lodging. Luckily, I'd been with the Lee Crofts for more than a year, so there was some money saved."

Saved !— From a pound a week !—
"You—had good references with the

Crofts, I suppose?"

She laughed. "You don't know much about it! A companion gives references—she doesn't ask for them. They really took

me out of charity."

"In a case like this one suspects everybody—the two young English boys in the Bois de Boulogne, even." Callendar took out a folded paper from his pocket-book; a small poster, advertising the description of the lost pearls and reward for their recovery. "This seems very exact. Sure that there is no mistake in it?—Look over it well. It gives size, tone, number of pearls to the string, weight, everything. It says there was no flaw in any pearl. Is that true?" He put the paper back in his case again, carefully, with an air of relief as she nodded assent.

"Good. It was your idea, I suppose, Miss Stair, to say that the pearls were family heirlooms belonging to somebody who was too poor even to insure them?"

Callendar's turn now unostentatiously to push his chair back under cover of the darkness. This was the point for which he had been manœuvring all the evening. If only Stanmer were here to help him out! Stanmer, innately diplomatic, with his composure and his "poker" face, to say nothing of his novelistic instinct for intrigue—the straightest man in the world himself, but so accustomed to meet guile in others that he could readily have played the part of deceiving Verena for her good. "You know men, even thieves, aren't all bad. If the man who took your necklace was a Latin, he was probably something of a sentimentalist. . . . That little phrase of yours might get him !—The reward, of course, isn't very tempting in view of the value of the jewels, but—it counts. It's easy and safe money. Those pearls would be hard to sell just now; the necklace could not be disposed of intact for a long time anyhow, and it isn't always convenient to wait for money.



"'It was your idea, I suppose, Miss Stair, to say that the pearls were family heirlooms belonging to somebody who was too poor even to insure them?'"

I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you got it back again—through somebody who said that he had picked it up and didn't know its value, or something of that kind."

Full light on her transfigured face; she caught her breath.

"The police held out no hope at all. . . . Oh-but I almost wish you hadn't said it! Hope— The hope is so almost unbearably sweet...."

He had had scruples till now. Scruples

about acting a lie even in her interests. He

was not "of the times," as Stanmer told him often. Honesty was his fetish. in that and he had no more use for you, however near and dear. . . . Yet he himself was now in process of engineering an intricate piece of duplicity, for Verena's He had given a famous firm of jewellers, orders to reproduce the stolen necklace at any cost, and to send it within the next three days to Verena from Trouville, a place always teeming with tourists, with a typed letter from a certain "Mrs. John Smith," saying that she had been in the Champs Elysées on the night of the supposed theft. She had then picked up what she thought was a string of pretty beads only to discover later, by the poster, which was widely distributed, that the pearls were real. As she was "going abroad" next day, touring from place to place, no letter of thanks was required, but she would like an acknowledgment saying that the packet dispatched from Trouville on a certain date had been duly received by V.S., published in the Australian newspaper, Argus, on a specified date, three months ahead.

"Hope can't be too sweet. It—keeps us going," Callendar said, stumbling in the attempt to find adequate words.

Stanmer, leaner, longer, more virile than ever, arrived unexpectedly early, before dinner, on the third day, and immediately became immersed in the last page proofs of his new book. Callendar was away at St. Cloud with Verena, taking her there by the river steam-boat instead of by car as he wished.

"You've been spending a fortune on me lately. I won't have it! Theatre—opera—teas at Colombius. . . . Anyone would think you were a millionaire!"

It was all he could do not to tell her that, when she chose, her life of fear and work was over. She had let fall once, a nightmare dread of illness, "no worse, of course, for me than anyone else, but in the old days I was never very strong in winter." The desire to be wholly fair to her, restrained him. She had seen nobody so intimately as himself, in all these years; she had no standard of comparison to judge him by. When Stanmer came, it would be different. Stanmer, with his pervasive personality and charm. Stanmer, even more readily than himself, perhaps, because he was so frequently in contact with artifice and pose, would "fall" for Verena's transparent innocence and honesty.

A sudden thought. What if Stanmer too ----?

He jerked his mind back to the present. Anything was better than lack of faith and honour. He—Callendar—must take his chance.

Stanmer's bedroom floor was covered with loose printed sheets. Callendar sorted them out when he came in.

"Turned up before I expected you. Why didn't you wire? I might have met you at the station. What's this? 'The Flaw?' Another detective story, I suppose? Founded on fact, as usual?"

Stanmer leant lazily back in the comfortable armchair with which Madame la Patronne had seen fit to supply his room. Stanmer was a universal favourite.

"Almost entirely. It's about a young woman who has managed to evade the delicate attentions of the police in two continents. Poisonous little reptile. The more so because she looks an angel. True Fra Angelico type. Danish by birth—all that Scandinavian fairness—but speaks English without a trace of accent. Innocence incarnate, you would say, to look at her—subtle as they make 'em, really; knows just what bait to play her different victims with."

"Crude—for one of your studies."

"No. Rather fascinating. To me, at least. She keeps the game up so amazingly—is doing so still, though she's playing a lone hand now, to change metaphors. Metcalfe, her father, tried to evade the police by bringing off a drowning stunt disappearance on one of the Swiss lakes, or in a motor accident—I forget exactly which. Anyway, he was caught, and is doing time now, at Parkhurst. She escaped. She would."

"This the real story or your plot?"

"The real story. Helga—that is her name, I believe—she goes by half a hundred pseudonyms, each fanciful—Evadne, and so on—is at large now, a small bird of prey, seeking another millionaire to mulct with customary ability, I suppose. She lays her trails weeks ahead. You'd better look out, Jim, by the way. You're just the kind of quarry whom the fair lady would mark down at once. And the newspapers have been busy enough with your doings for weeks past. If you'd only do as I told you and subscribe to a press agency, you'd know that"

"What's the lady's procedure?"

"It varies with the victim. But one or

two points nearly always recur. Metcalfe and she always managed to meet their millionaires for the first time alone, through some accident. Engine trouble to a car, the lady fainting in a street crowd, or something. Since his removal she has tried another game. Poses as a bereaved orphan, or very young widow-she doesn't look a day over twenty, you know-penniless-so unspotted from the world that you feel one rough word in her presence would besmirch her-diametrically contrary to the attitude of to-day's debutante. Looking out for, or just out of, work—rouses sympathy. Only one possession of any value left from the wreck of past fortunes—you know the sort of thing; a brooch, pendant, or spray; jewels, anyway. Suddenly, it's stolen. The millionaire, of course, comes to the rescue; offers a big reward sometimes, in which event a confederate turns up to claim it, and they share, and then decamp. sometimes, he will have a replica of the supposedly missing article of jewellery made for her—with which the damsel promptly makes away—the original, of course, being valueless. She's pulled that game off successfully in at least three cases within the last year to my knowledge, and braved the police and all too. An actress to the fingertips. She fooled an Inspector of Police who had a description of her in his pocket, by posing as one of her own victims, once. Metcalfe was a prince in his profession, and she had ample opportunities of testing his methods during the years in which they lived and worked successfully together."

Callendar lit a cigarette.

"I believe in atmosphere. No decent man would be with a woman like that without—some sense of discomfort, surely, however beautiful and adroit she was."

Stanmer laughed.

"She'd outwit the devil himself, I believe. Her art is consummate. She could almost deceive herself at times, they say. Gets regularly caught up in the play. . . . Young men, whom she ruined, when she was with Metcalfe, attest that. She can blush, if you'll believe me. I met old Havilland at Milan on the way through. She cleaned his nephew out of a cool three thousand for a diamond spray some time back. He's about the only man living who ever caught her unawares and took a snapshot of her. She avoids the camera, as a rule. Naturally." He grinned. "Old Havilland lent it to me. Unfortunately, it was badly 'fixed,' and is fading so quickly

that you can only just make out the features now." He pulled out a worn envelope from his pocket. "Not very distinctive, of course. The ridiculous feature of the age is to make every woman more or less alike—you can really hardly tell Lady Champneys Beaudesert of Mayfair from Miss Snicketty Snooks of the Halls in a picture paper. Yet all the same—"

Yet all the same. . . ? Callendar, his back turned from his friend, took the picture with a set face. It was blurred, certainly, but his brain swam as he looked at it, intently. It was a quarter-plate picture of a girl's head—an oval face, with a singularly clean outline, narrowing at the chin like some Fra Angelico angel, and innocent eyes that looked straight back at you, gallantly. . . Stanmer, suddenly aware of prolonged silence, looked up and started as he caught sight of Callendar's reflection in the looking-glass.

A knock at the door. Stanmer turned. And simultaneously, with an abrupt jerk, Callendar moved stiffly to the window, and, still in silence, held the portrait nearer to

the light.

"Pardon, messieurs." The hall-porter stood, beaming with smiles, in the doorway. "I knocked repeatedly at Monsieur Callendar's door and was told by Jeanne that I should find him here. Mademoiselle Stair begs that Monsieur Callendar will go down to the lounge at once. She has good news. Her missing pearls have been returned."

"Tell Miss Stair I'll come down. See you

later-at dinner, Stanmer."

The door closed.

Stanmer whistled. Thoughtfully, he took up again the little snapshot photograph which Callendar, without a word, had laid down on the dressing-table, looked once more at it, and then, half hesitating, put it in his note-case.

Dinner at the Hotel du Souris is served in two relays; at seven and at eight o'clock. The hall was emptying as Callendar came down in the lift.

Verena was standing by the long hall mirror facing the door, with an open brownpaper parcel in her trembling hand. Her eyes were pools of light.

"My pearls!" She held them out. "I can't believe it—yet. This was delivered just now, an ordinary packet, left by hand, with just a written message to say——"

He interrupted her. Hadn't he dictated the typewritten message? But why on earth had the jewellers disobeyed orders and not sent the pearls by post? No time to think of that though, now. He must act quickly, even at the risk of her mistaking him. . . .

"Verena, my friend will be down in a moment. I want to ask you something first. My dear—my dear . . . I love you. Will you marry me?"

He bent low for her answer. Still holding her hand in his, he turned to greet Stanmer,

who had walked down.

"Dick, Miss Stair has promised to be my wife."

The table had been kept for them. A white man, Stanmer. He played the game. Not by word or gesture did he betray surprise. Debonair, easy, he listened sympathetically to Verena's almost incoherent tale of how her pearls were lost; switched off the conversation as soon as possible before the question of their recovery could be debated; talked of his and their interests and of the future. But Callendar, knowing him so well, read aright the anxiety in his eyes; heard the strained note in his laugh.

Over at last, that odd, dramatic meal with the ghost of fear pricking at the heart of one at least of the three persons who took part in it. When they moved into the lounge again, Stanmer found some vacant chairs hidden behind a palm. The glass doors of the hotel entrance swung apart a moment later to admit a messenger in a peaked cap, who spoke to the porter, and then advanced to Callendar with a letter.

"May I read it, Verena?"

"Please, do. There, Mr. Stanmer, the clasp of my pearls has come unloose again. It often did . . . I pressed it in with the point of my nail-scissors once. See, there's a tiny mark——"

The words drifted to Callendar as he re-read his letter for the second time. It

was dated that same afternoon, and marked "Despatched by hand, 18.45.

" DEAR SIR,-

"We greatly regret the delay in executing your esteemed order. Owing to the extreme difficulty of matching up all the pink pearls, it has been impossible for us to deliver the string as promised to the lady whose address you gave us. The necklace is still five pearls short. We are therefore compelled to wait another three or four days to complete the transaction. Trusting that the delay will not cause you any inconvenience,

"Believe us, Sir, to remain,
"Your obedient servants,
"Etc."

—"It's so lovely too," said Verena, "that it was just a poor taxi-man who found my pearls, somebody who will look even upon my reward as a fortune!——"She held out the crumpled letter, painstakingly written by someone who was unaccustomed to hold a pen. "I wish——Oh, don't you think that we might drive to the man's lodgings to-night and give it him, or must it all be done through the police?"

Callendar rose, jubilant. "He looks years younger," Stanmer thought, critically.

"We'll go now, anyway. All three of us. By the way, Stanmer, I want you to read through this letter of Cartier's, en route. And—you were showing me a snapshot just now—the snapshot of a very beautiful lady. Have you got it with you? May I see it, now?" Stanmer handed it over, dumbly. "Look!" he said. "Face-modelling—nose—eyes—all as fine and delicate as Verena's. But look closely at the lobe of the left ear. Take my magnifying-glass. The hair doesn't cover it, as it was meant to—the portrait was evidently taken in a high wind. Do you see? In the ear of the pictured lady, isn't there a flaw?"...





'I'd sooner die than marry a coward like you,' she blazed out. 'No man as is a man would try to win a girl by threatening the man she loves. Be off wi' ye. Never let me hear of weddin' a thing like you again.'"

THE HERIOT

By JAMES BLYTH

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON

"You see, Pansy, it's up to you," said Matt Strong. "You say you love this clod, this boor Knyvett, and if you'll marry me I'll be easy with him when his father dies, and you know the old fellow is expected to pan out at any moment now. If you won't, well, I'll smash him."

"If you can," retorted Pansy.

"Oh, I can all right. Don't trouble your head about that. And I will, so make up your mind to that. If you won't marry me but insist on taking him you'll have a pauper for a husband."

Matt Strong was the new Lord of the Manor of Aldercar. He was the only son of a war profiteer, who, on finding that his robbery of the country during hostilities had resulted in bringing him a fortune of nearly half a million, had lived not wisely but too well, with the result that his son Matt had the spending of

the money. His great ambition was to be a country gentleman, and he did not realise the impossibility of this. He had bought out the old family of the Carterets, who had been the tutelary lords of Aldercar for four centuries, and had settled down at the beautiful old Manor House in the expectation of being accepted throughout the county as "one of the gentry."

He was aching under the blunt rebuffs he had received when he first saw Pansy Thurston, the only child of George Thurston, one of the tenant farmers of the Aldercar estate, and from that moment he had troubled little about the county folk. His one desire was to make Pansy his own, and he had made up his mind to marry her. When he learnt that he had as little chance of winning Pansy as he had of becoming recognised by the real county gentlefolk as one of themselves, and

that the girl's heart was given to young Jack Knyvett, the son of John Knyvett, of Aldercar Farm, he was furious. He found that Aldercar Farm was the only old copyhold on the estate which had not been enfranchised, and that on the death of every tenant, the lord could claim not only a fine arbitrary from his successor, but a "heriot," that is to say, the best beast or horse on the farm.

He ascertained that there was a mortgage outstanding on the farm to the amount of £1,000, and he quietly succeeded in obtaining a transfer of this to himself. In his opinion he held the Knyvetts in the palm of his hand, for the old man had long been ill and his death was to be expected at any time.

What made the heriot so important was that the dying man had, during the later years of his life, devoted most of his time and a great deal of his money to breeding show Thitherto he had been unsuccessful, but there was a rumour in the village that at last he had "done the trick" and that the young bull Aldercar II, or Masterful, as he was called, was expected to win the championship at the imminent Royal Show at Norwich.

If old Knyvett died before the show, Matt would claim the bull, Daneshire Champion II, as his by right of the law of heriot. If, on the other hand, the old fellow survived, the price the bull was likely to fetch, if it won the championship, would possibly enable the Knyvetts to clear their farm of encumbrances and possibly to enfranchise it.

Much therefore depended on how long old

John could hold out.

If he lived until the Royal Show all would be well with Jack Knyvett and Pansy. If he died before-well, then it would depend on "things," those "things" consisting of various events with which the brains of Pansy and Jack Knyvett had, of late, been greatly

occupied.

Of course it seems silly that the Royal Show should make such a difference. Aldercar II would be as valuable before the show as he was after, but his realisable price would depend upon his success in the ring. If, as Jack and Pansy believed would happen, he won the championship for cattle of the whole show, he would be worth a couple of thousand pounds or more. could be sold in the show grounds, and the £2,000 would enable Jack practically to free himself of the bondage in which Matt Strong thought he held him. But if the father died before the show Strong would undoubtedly claim the bull as his heriot, and then the arbitrary fine payable before the son could be entered on the court roll of the manor, together with the mortgage in the parvenu's hands—for the repayment of which notice had already been given—would practically ruin the last scion of the old family of Knyvett. In the latter circumstances both Pansy and Jack knew that George Thurston would never let his daughter marry Jack. Indeed, already the old farmer had tried to persuade his daughter that she would do well to take Matt as her husband. It was not that he preferred the man to Jack. deed, he liked Jack and loathed the son of the profiteer. But Daneshire blood loves " brass," and, moreover, like any of his fellow tenant farmers, old George would have been proud to see his daughter lady of the manor.

Unfortunately, from his point of view, Pansy had no taste for the new squire. Since they had been children together she and Jack Knyvett had been lovers, and they had not the slightest intention of ceasing to be lovers because of the advent of Matt Strong.

The threats of the latter infuriated the "I'd sooner die than marry a coward like you," she blazed out. "No man as is a man would try to win a girl by threatening the man she loves. Be off wi'ye. Never let me hear of weddin' a thing like you again."

Matt Strong's fat shiny face paled, and his clean-shaven lips curled in sympathy with his nose, which pinched its nostrils and thrust its sharp point down over the curving lips as the girl's contempt bit into his selfcomplacency.

"You vixen," he snarled, "I'll have you yet, and your fancy man shall come and ask me for work before I've done with him. for you—you and your father—

"You can't hurt father. He's got a long lease, thank God. Dear old Squire Carteret gave it him before you cheated him out of the manor, and you can't upset it. I know it, for father guessed your like might try to come it on him and he's seen his lawyer. Oh, you coward! You coward!"

Tears flashed in her eyes, not tears of grief, but tears of sheer temper. She swung round on her heels, and as Matt Strong threw his arms about her and tried to force her to him, she smote him on the cheek as hard as her vigorous arm could swing the blow.

With a curse Strong released her, and she ran out of the dairy where the lord of the manor had found her.

Matt looked after her with ardent eyes. Indeed, she was a girl to win a man's love. Her five feet eight inches contained a shape at once stalwart and lissome. There was nothing of the fashionable flatchested, fleshless figure about her. shape was buxom, her shoulders were square, her head was carried proudly on a somewhat long but columnar neck. Her lines were exquisite from shoulder to ankle. While she possessed no wasp waist, the curves of her tarso drew in gracefully, so as to make the waist seem smaller than it was. But it was her face which had stirred the cockney more than her figure. She was a typical Daneshire beauty. Her face was a long oval, surmounted by a mass of glorious red-gold hair, massed in one simple coil on the top of her head. Not for her the bobbing or shingling of preposterous fashion. Free of confining pins, her hair fell below her knees. in rippling swathes of coppery sheen. She would have "bobbed" or shingled her nose as soon as her hair.

Her cycs were very large, and of a hazel rather darker than the ordinary greenish tint of that hue. Her cheeks were well rounded, and the bones low enough to give no sign of their existence.

Her mouth was not large enough to be ugly nor small enough to be peevish, and "the under-lip sucked in as if it strove to kiss itself." The upper-lip was short, and terminated in the "cherry blob" which is always seen where there is the true Cupid's bow bend.

Her nose was short and straight, full nostrilled; and her chin was firm and square, but softened by two delicious dimples, one on each side.

Indeed, she was a woman fit to represent her noble county as a specimen of its fair daughters, and she walked and carried herself in the way of the hackneyed old Vergilian cliché: "Vera incessu patuit dea certe."

Her father had gone to Beccles market, and no sooner did she hear her landlord's car snarling with its Klaxon along the highway to the Manor House than she picked up her heels and frankly ran at her topmost speed towards Aldercar Farm, the pasture marshes of which adjoined her father's.

It was about five o'clock on the eve of a glorious day in early July, and she had heard the "ha hao, ha hao, ha haos" of Knyvett's cowherd calling the kine home for the evening milking some time ago, and knew that she would find her lover somewhere near the milking-sheds or the dairy.

Jack Knyvett had just left the former when he saw his beloved racing up "the f'eld" towards him. The exertion of her run had loosened the pins which always seemed to confine her tresses under protest, and wisps of her glorious hair were floating about her face as she ran.

"Oh, Jack!" she cried, when she was within ten yards of him. "How is your father? Take me somewhere where we can talk without being overheard. Oh, Jack, you do love me, don't you? More than you do the farm?"

Jack looked at her anxiously. There must be something very wrong to unnerve his darling in this way. Never before had he seen her so emotionally distressed. He had seen the Strong car go to Oatacres, the Thurston holding, and at once he guessed that the new squire had been the cause of his sweetheart's disturbance.

"What is it, my darlin'?" he asked, as he led her into the old farm-house. "Have that warmin' up at the Hall been upsettin' on ye?"

"He says he'll ruin ye unless I go to chutch along o' him," said Pansy, "and oh, Jack, my darlin', I couldn't do that even for you."

"And that 'ud be a nice doin' for me and all," cried Jack. "Just you let me see another man—"

"You won't! You won't! But listen, Jack dear. He says he can smash ye up if your father dies afore the Royal Show. How do the old man fare, dear? The show be the day arter to-morrow, bain't it? Surely he can last out till then. Oh, my darlin'," she continued, flinging her arms round her lover's neck and kissing him fiercely upon his eager lips, "I couldn't be the wife of that toad even to save you."

"What's he been a-doin' on?" asked Jack, his honest face aflame with indignation. "As true as Heaven I'll lay a stick acrost his back if he've been insultin' on ye. Ruin me? Let him try it! And faa'er? He'll live long enow for me to sell the bull and clear off all the owin's. He's bound to win the championship o' the show."

He rumbled inwardly, like some volcano about to be active.

"What do he mean by heriot, or some at like that, Jack?" asked the girl. "He said as if your father died afore the show and afore you'd sold Masterful he'd be able to take him as a heriot."

take him as a heriot."

Jack smiled grimly. "I thought that was his game," he said. "Now don't you tell

him, my darlin', but I reckon I'll do him there. He think he know a lot comin' down from Lunnon, but we farmers bain't such a lot o' simple chumps as he seem to fare to think. I say, Pansy dear, be that bullock shud in the fifteen acre, just agin my mowin' mash, be that empty just now?"

"Yes. That ha' stood empty since father sold his last fat stock. Why?"

"Could you let me have the use on it should I want it, key and all, without your father knowin'? 'Tain't that I mind his knowin' if he could keep his mouth shut, but you know Pansy my darlin' as sometimes he fare a bit free with his tongue when he've been to the Pot in Hand."

"Yes," replied his sweetheart.
"I could manage that, and I have
the key in my parkut as it happen.
Here ta be. You take it. Father
never go down that way now. But

what is it?"

"I'll tell ye if ye like, but I reckon that 'ud be better as you di'n't know nothin'," said Jack, with a grim smile. "Now," he said, "come you along o' me and have a look at Masterful."

Masterful was the home name for Aldercar II, a name which he had earned by his obstinacy with everyone but the master he loved and the cowman, Sam Clark. Those two could do anything with the young bull, but woe betide another who ventured to interfere with him.

There was a sly smile on Jack's face as he led his sweetheart to the "show sheds." As the young couple approached the building they met Sam Clark. "Have ye done it, Sam?" asked Jack.

"Ah, master, that's done all right and tight," replied the hand. "You'll find him in the shud."

There was a delicious scent of new-mown hay in the cooling evening air. Pansy stopped for a minute and sniffed it. "D'ye know, Jack," she said, "I believe you get better hay off your land than what father do off his. There is a smell o' clover in yours which he hain't got in his. Heavens! That smell like a nosegay, that that do."

"It's good hay," agreed Jack tersely, as he opened the door of the shed whither they

were bound.

"But why have ye got him up from mash so 'arly?" asked the knowledgable farmer's daughter.

"Until he go to the show he bain't goin' to be left down to mash without someone to keep an eye on him. There's some as is good enow to p'ison him to stop his winnin' the championship. Jack Hale, the squire's bailiff, is showin', ye know, and he allust was



a bad egg. I cotched him sneakin' round the paddock t'other day when Masterful was there, and I speculate as he went off with a flea in his ear. He's a peevish mischeevous warmin' is Jack Hale, like all his fambly, and I don't take no stock o' them South Suffolkers. They're a mean lot. That's why Masterful be under lock and key."

The light was somewhat dim within the shed, but when her lover led her to one of the stalls Pansy had no difficulty in recognising the splendid lines of the red bull, so like his sire Sandringham Champion IX. She went

up to him and stroked his mighty back, as straight as a ruler and as broad as a billiard table. The bull turned quiet and inquiring eyes upon her, but made no protest.

eyes upon her, but made no protest.
"He's a beauty, Jack," said Pansy.
Then she added hesitatingly: "But some-

transcendentally superb as she had imagined it to be.

"That's the light, my dear. You hain't seed him for a month or two, have ye? I reckon there won't be much at the show to beat him."



hows I didn't think he was so light in colour. I don't recolleck seein' that white splotch on his nose. But sure enow he's a beauty. But haven't he lost a little weight?"

The girl was examining the bull carefully. She saw it was a magnificent animal, but yet somehow it did not appear to be so "And that's Heaven's truth," he muttered to himself.

Pansy gave the great hind-quarters of the magnificent bull another friendly pat, and then said, "He shan't have you, my beauty. That he shan't, heriot or no heriot."

Jack chuckled. "No," he agreed, "I

reckon he oan't, and if he dew—well there."

Again he chuckled and led the way out of

he shed.

"You'll look after him, Jack. Even if your father don't die he'll try to do ye a mischief, somehow. I'm certain on it. If he do die, then he'll try to take Masterful as a heriot. What is a heriot, Jack?"

"Well I reckon it may be anything. Here that seem to be a bull. I bain't no scholard. But that's what I make out on't."

"Well, I don't know, but I'll ax father."

"Ah, dew," said Jack. "Now I must be a-goin' arter the milk train. Good night tee ye, my darlin', and doan't you worrit. I'll lay ye a penny as Mr. Strong as he call hisself won't never lay a finger on Masterful and that he won't do no ruinin' on this bit o' land. You may tell him so when you see him agin."

The lovers embraced tenderly and Pansy went off home.

Jack sought Sam Clark. "I ha' got the key o' the shud," he said, "and you may make the shift as soon as ye choose. And I say, Sam, Miss Pansy had a good look and she couldn't see no difference. If she can't I reckon none o' the Hall lot can."

"But you don't want to lose nayther on 'em, Master," protested the loyal cowman, a little grumpily. "I allust liked Snowdrop the better of the two cows, and I'll lay she give a gallon more milk a day than Master-

ful's mother, Brindled Beauty."

"'Tain't milk as count with a bull," retorted the master, "and one on 'em's bound to go. But which will make all the differ to me 'twixt life and death. Now you wait till every mortal ha' gone to bed and then do as I told ye, and get the cart ready to take him to Norwich by night."

It was on the evening of the following day that Jack stole quietly up the twisting staircase from the farm-house kitchen to the upper quarters, to pay his respects, his customary evening visit to his father. All the bedrooms intercommunicated, so that in order to reach the most distant it was necessary to pass through the five or six that intervened.

The old man was in a sort of bed-sittingroom at the end of the upper floor, and when Jack opened the door he saw him sitting, apparently in quiet repose, in his great arm-

chair by the window.

"Hullo, Faa'er," he said. "How do you fare this evenin'? A but brighter like?"

There was no reply.

Jack hurried across the room until he was able to see his father's face.

Then he knew. The jaw had dropped, the eyes were glazed, though even in their vacancy they seemed to be looking out across the acres the old man had loved so well.

Jack gave a great gulp. He had dearly loved his father. They had been "pals." The old man had taken pride in seeing his son grow up into a replica of himself, had been delighted to see that Jack was as interested and as capable in stock-breeding as any one of their race. No one knew better than he how vital it was that he should live over the first day of the Royal Show; and Jack thought, with intense sorrow, that his father's last moments might have been embittered by the thought that he had died too soon, that Matt Strong would triumph.

"But he hain't doed it yet," muttered Jack. "I wonder if the old chap know what I ha' done, and if he think it right. I reckon he'd wholly have a laugh if he knowed. Thank God, I thought on it in time. Now there's no call to keep quiet about poor father's death. They'll come for their heriot. Well, let 'em, and be hanged to 'em."

Before he left the room he raised the body in his arms and carried it to the bed. There he arranged it as best he could, so that the old man lay, clothed, but with his eyes closed as though he were asleep. Then, with a stinging sensation in his eyes, and a gulp in his throat, the son bent over the bed and pressed his lips lightly to his father's forehead.

"I hope as you'll unnerstand as we'll do 'em," he said. "I should be ashamed to call myself your son if I let him get the master o' me."

The news spread rapidly through the village, and Matt Strong rubbed his hands together and chuckled when he heard it. "Now, my lady," he said, "perhaps you'll think better of it. I've got your fancy man in a cleft stick, and there he'll keep till there's not a bit o' copyhold left on the manor. That'll merge in my freehold now."

Although the village had by that time come to have a good notion of the possibilities which lay in Matt Strong, there was a general outcry of indignation when it became known that soon after eight o'clock, of the morning following on old John Knyvett's death, Strong's bailiff had gone to Aldercar Farm and claimed the heriot.

"You don't expect me to help ye," I suppose," said Jack, when he had expressed his opinion of the proceeding. "I suppose

you know enow to pick the best on the farm. Go you and do it."

"Oh, I know enow for that," replied Hale, the bailiff.

It may be that he was reviled with special bitterness because there were others who thought that they were more suited to the place; for "brass" cannot but be a potent factor with a class which never really earns enough to feed and clothe its families. Still, it can honestly be said that if the difference were no more than sixpence a week—no inconsiderable trifle to the agricultural labourer—Jack Knyvett's service would have always been preferred to that of Matt Strong.

Hale disliked the off-hand manner in which Jack had met his demand. Even he felt that it was rather disgusting for his master to make his claim for the heriot while the dead body of the late tenant on the court roll still lay upstairs in the old farm-house. But he could not afford any delicacy of feeling. He had his duty to perform. He beckoned to Sam Clark, who went to him with surprising promptness.

"You know where the young bull is kept, Sam," he said. "That's no good making any bother about it. I've come for it and I'm goin' to take it away, so show me where it is and that'll be wuth half a gallon to you at the Pot in Hand."

"I've no objections," said Sam, and Hale thought that even he was not such a traitor as Sam.

Jack's favourite man led the way to a shed, and flung open the door. "There he is," he said. "You can take him."

"Ah!" said Hale. "That's him. I ha' seed him afore."

"Well, take him then, bor," urged Sam.
"I ain't interferin' along o' ye, am I?"

The stalwart bull turned a red and suspicious eye on the stranger.

"Why, he bain't ringled," cried Hale.
"How be we to lead him?"

"That's your look-out. He come quiet enow with me," laughed Sam.

Sam swiftly opened the door of the loose box, in which the bull was confined, and with a clumsy but eloquent gesture, offered the superb animal to him who demanded it

The bull evidently wished for fresh air and exercise, for with a rush, and with lowered head, he came storming out of the shed into the bright morning sunshine.

Hale made an ineffective grab at him—and it took some courage to do that—but

he was swept aside as a fly is swept aside by the whisk of a cow's tail.

"Now you ha' done it," said Sam. "That'll take you all the mornin' to cop him now he ha' got free. I'll tell ye what. I'll lend ye a bit o' line, and if you can noose him round the snout you'll have him proper."

Hale had not been careless enough to come alone for the bull and he called the two men he had brought with him, and bade them assist him to capture the "heriot."

While the chase was progressing in the home paddock Pansy Thurston appeared on her way to offer love and sympathy to Jack. She halted at sight of the careering bull, and for a moment she looked puzzled.

But Jack ran to meet her, and for a few seconds the bull was forgotten by the couple of lovers.

Then again the puzzled look came to Pansy's eyes.

"What does it mean, dear?" she asked.

"They've come for Masterful," replied Jack. "You must understand as he could claim the best beast on the farm at the time of father's death, and of course he've chosen Masterful, as he think."

Pansy looked into her lover's eyes, questioningly. Jack nodded. "Tha's all right," he said. "But I hain't give up hope yet."

Pansy smiled. "No, I dare say you hain't," she said. "That's just as well as faa'er didn't come with me as he talked o' doin'."

"Perhaps it is," agreed Jack. "I'd allust rayther have ye by yourself."

It took Hale and his men a good two hours to capture the bull, but at last they succeeded, and with a stout line made fast round his nose, and another round his horns, the bull was towed reluctantly off to the Manor House Farm.

The whole village, including the Manor House, was amazed to learn that Jack Knyvett meant to attend the first day of the Royal Show, although his father had not yet been laid underground and although he had been deprived—robbed, many people declared—of the bull on which he had relied to save his fortune. Nevertheless, Jack did go, and farmer Jennis, a neighbouring stockbreeder, gasped with amazement when he found that John Knyvett was still showing Aldercar II. Moreover, there was the bull, superb in his red magnificence, as proof that there was no mistake.

It may be that the story had got out and that Jack found sympathy with very important people. At all events, the classes in which Masterful was entered were judged early and quickly, and before 2 p.m. it was known that Jack Knyvett had beaten everyone in the classes and that in all probability he would carry off the prize for the best beast in the show. A great landowner and breeder, who had heard something of Jack's tale, made an offer of £2,500 for the bull. "I'll take my chance whether he wins the best beast in the show prize, Knyvett," said Lord Shortvale. "He's worth the money, anyway. I think the best thing I can do is to pay the amount into your bank and take the bull now, don't you?"

There was a kindly smile on the great man's face. "You'll send me the pedi-

gree," he said.

"Thank you, my lord," stammered Jack, delighted at seeing the last of his difficulties removed. "That's wholly kind."

"Don't say any more. It will put you

right, won't it?"

"Thank Heaven it will!" said Jack, wringing the hand the peer offered him.

"You see," Jack explained to Matt Strong, when the latter came storming down to Aldercar Farm, recking naught of the corpse still lying upstairs, "my father and me had two good cows: Masterful's mother, Brindled Beauty and Snowdrop, the mother of the one yew ha' got."

"I don't care about that. You moved the best bull off the farm. I can claim the best beast on the farm at the time your

father died."

"You ha' got it. Masterful, or Aldercar II, worn't on the farm when faa'er died."

"Where was he?"

"Ax and find out," said Jack, irritated beyond endurance. Then he thought the truth might be painful to this fat beast. "If you must know, he was on Oatacres. Miss Thurston lent me one of their shuds. There was better air for him there."

To bring a long story to an end, Strong found that he could do nothing. It was true that he had got a good beast, but it was not to be compared with Masterful. An expert would not have classed the two together.

Jack's £2,500 enabled him to pay off the mortgage, and not only to pay the fine upon his father's death but to enfranchise his farm, where he and Pansy live in happiness,

prosperity and popularity.

The story was told abroad, and the county took so severe a view of Strong's action that he was cut to an even greater extent than he had been before he did what he did for love of Pansy.

He was compelled to sell the manor or to

live in isolation.

It is unfortunate that there is one other person who regrets Jack Knyvett's triumph. It is old Roger Thurston. He had set his heart on seeing his daughter the lady of the manor, and on being in the position of father-in-law to a man who seemed to be "made o' brass."

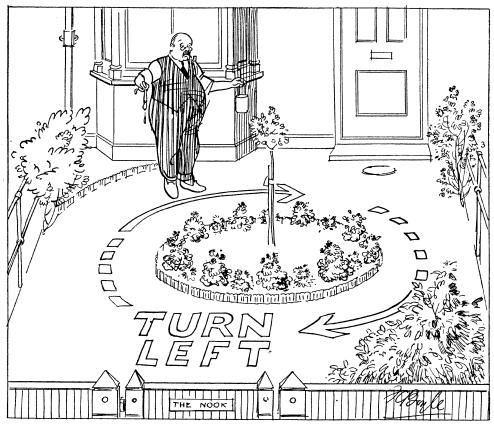
But, as the old fellow is genuinely fond of his daughter, and is devoted to his grandchildren, he takes care to conceal his resentment, for he knows that neither Pansy nor her husband will stand "too much puttin" on," and he could not bear to be deprived of the society of his daughter and her children.

Owing to the health and number of the progeny of Jack and Pansy it seems probable that the freehold of Aldercar Farm will remain in the family of Knyvett in the future as long as that family has appeared on the court roll as copyholders in the past.

This is well, for there is no finer stock in England than the yeoman stock of East Anglia, the stock from which Cromwell's Ironsides were drawn, and which will always rise as one man to protect the liberty of the

land it loves.





WELL IN THE FASHION.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE UNDYING FIRE. By B. Noël Saxelby.

"HAVE you seen this week's Modern World?" asked Helen casually.

"No," I said absently. I was about to add, "I never see it," but something in Helen's expression arrested me and I changed it to a blunt "Why?"

"Oh, nothing," said Helen, again casually—too casually. "There's an article in it that might interest you—that's all."

I contemplated her thoughtfully. There was a suppressed excitement in her face, a triumphant gleam in her eye. Could it be—— But Helen had always struck me as being of the breezy, athletic type, not interested in reading, certainly not in writing. My eye fell on her bulging handbag, and I grabbed for it. Helen grabbed too—just too late—and then flung herself back with a little complacent laugh as I extracted from it a much-handled copy of The Modern World.

Well, there it was, as large as life; "Tennis Clubs," by Helen Hardman.

"My name looks rather well, don't you think?" said Helen, regarding it fondly. I was deeply impressed, and clamoured for details. She had suddenly "had the idea," it seemed, and sat down then and there and dashed it off. Her brother had got it typed, and eight days afterwards—"just eight days, my dear"—the editor's letter of acceptance had come. That was one short month ago.

"If you'd told me then that my name would ever be at the foot of a printed article," said Helen impressively, "I wouldn't have believed you. I simply would not have believed you."

"How much did they pay you?" I asked respectfully. But the cheque, it seemed, hadn't arrived yet.

"Suppose it's three guineas," she said dreamily, "or, say, two pounds ten, and suppose I did one article a week—I ought to manage that easily—that's . . . how much a year?" She drifted into a state of ecstatic contemplation.

"What's the next one going to be about?" I broke in on her dreams to ask,

"Well, I'm not absolutely sure yet," confessed Helen. "It had better not be too much like this. I'll have to wait for an inspiration."

II.

The next time I saw Helen was one morning in the stationery department of the Stores. She was buying large quantities of scribbling paper, and blushed slightly when she caught my eye.

"Well," I said cheerfully, "got your inspira-tion yet?"

"S-sh!" she hissed, with a conscious glance at the shop assistant, who immediately put on a politely blank expression and listened hard. "The fact is," she added in low, but not too low, thing about "work." Her mother sighed and pulled her chair closer to me.

"I don't know what to do with the child," she confided. "I wish you could persuade her to give up this new craze for writing. Of course, we were very proud of her article. I didn't understand much of what it was about myself, but no doubt it was very good—anyway, they paid her two guineas for it. But there's no peace and quietness in the house now-she's so irritable. She forgets everything. If you'll believe me, she forgot to put any baking powder in the cake yesterday: she said she'd a sudden inspiration. Inspiration!" snorted poor Mrs. Hardman, who obviously considered baking



Collector: Remember the guy, sir! SHORT-SIGHTED OLD GENTLEMAN: No-I can't say I do.

tones, "one isn't always in the vein. You know all writers speak of the miserable blank stretches they suffer while their ideas are crystallising. It's too true, my dear. Writing has its pains as well as its pleasures." She "However," she added mysteriously, "I think it will be all right now."

I could get no more out of her then, and soon afterwards I went away for some weeks; but when I called, not long after my return, she was looking distinctly harassed.

"Any luck with your writing?" I was beginning, but she pretended not to hear, and her mother gave me a frown of such portentous meaning that I hastily changed the subject.

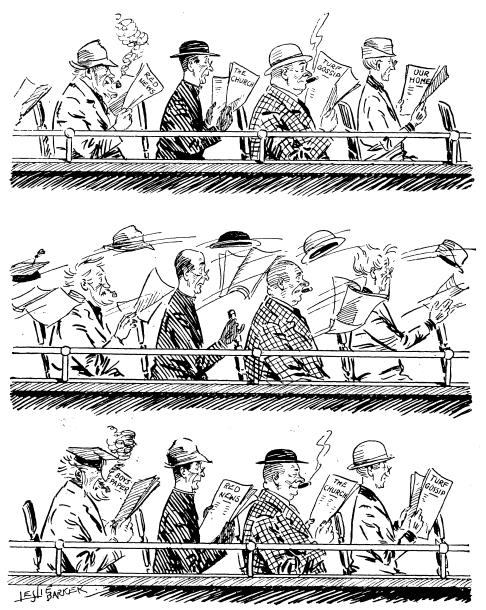
After tea Helen slipped away, mumbling some-

powder of more vital importance. "She's getting positively thin, too, and jumps every time she hears the postman. She keeps sending things out, and then when they come back, as they always seem to do," pursued the traitor, rapidly letting cats out of bags, "she gets so cross there's no saying a word to her. Do try to get her to give it up and be her sensible self again."

III.

"Come and see me, there's a dear," ran the note. "I've got a rotten cold and feel fed up with everything. This is a vile world. H.'

I found the invalid drooping over a fire in her



A WINDY DAY.

bedroom. Poor Helen! Literature had gone back on her badly. She dropped her pose of "we authors" and poured out her woes unreservedly.

"But, you know," she concluded, a little cheered with the recital and three cups of tea, "I maintain it really was a good idea at bottom. I tried it as an article for The Modern World, and they sent it back by return! Then I thought it might be better as a story, so I tried that and sent it to several papers, but none of them would have it. It's no use—I'll have to make up my mind to give it up. At any

rate," she added in heavily ironical tones, "mother will be pleased!"

I offered what humble consolation I could, and presently Helen's sense of humour asserted itself, and she began to laugh helplessly. I joined in with relief.

"Do you know where it is now?" she interrupted herself to say. She pointed with a fine gesture to the mantelpiece. "You see those spills?" she continued hysterically. I nodded. "Well, my dear, that's what my great idea has come to. The child of my brain goes to light the pyre of sacrifice, and if that's a bit mixed,

I fled.

make allowances for a distraught parent. It's really rather funny when you come to think of it."

She gazed at the paper spills for a moment. Then the light of reason faded out, and a fanatic gleam appeared in her eyes.

"Yes," she repeated slowly, "it is rather funny, isn't it? I wonder . . ." She mused silently. Then she turned to me with excite-"I've got an inspiration!" announced triumphantly (poor Mrs. Hardman!). "I'll write a humorous poem about it! Spills . . ills . . . fills . . . what rhymes 'idea'? Oh, must you go?"

Rise up and fight for liberty! Alas! it is too late to. His typist is the only she Poor Simpson can dictate to. Jessie Pope.



"AT the party I mistook a millionaire for the butler and tipped him half-a-crown," said Jenkinson, "and afterwards we had a good laugh over the affair."

"A whimsical episode, to be sure," agreed one

of his hearers.

"Yes, but he never handed back the halfcrown," was his reply.



GOOD BUSINESS!

"I want some cigarettes, please?"

"Yes, miss-what kind?

"Oh dear! I've forgotten the name, but it's that kind the advertisements speak so highly of."

THE DICTATOR.

What time young Simpson-getting wed-Exchange marital vows, He meant to be, or so he said, The master of his house.

Thereon the gods, with furtive laugh, The lady's will unloosed, And very soon his better half Securely ruled the roost.

Years passed. His little daughter grew In dignity and grace, And, backing Mummy through and through, Kept Daddy in his place.

Third fiddle Simpson learnt to play; At home suppressed and checked, Our hapless hero, day by day, Was hen and pullet pecked.

SHORTLY after two o'clock one morning a doctor drove four miles in answer to a telephone On his arrival the man who had summoned him said: "Doctor, I'm not in great pain, but somehow I have a feeling that the end is nigh."

The doctor felt his pulse and listened to his heart. "Have you made your will?" he asked at last.

The man turned pale. "Oh, doctor, it can't be that!" he gasped.

"You had better telephone to a clergyman and wire for your people," continued the doctor.

"Oh, doctor, how long do you give me?" groaned the man.

"Well, there is nothing wrong with you, but I hate to think that I'm the only man you've made a fool of," explained the medical man.

CAVE CANEM.

By Margaret Butcher.

BEATRICE and Alice and I were chatting in the Club House.

"I wonder what Charlie Simpson's dog is?" observed Beatrice.

"Oh, probably an Airedale," replied Alice, "or a chow."

"Now, I should have thought a pom," said Beatrice. "Or even a collie."

This was becoming interesting.

"I should like to have a look at this animal," I remarked. "It must be practically unique, from your description."

"Oh, we haven't seen it," answered Alice,

is almost invariably put by the tradesmen's entrance"

"Very reasonable, I'm sure," replied Beatrice.

"A dog who bites the butcher's boy and tears the baker limb from limb is an adjunct to any home."

"You've no idea," supplemented Alice, "how a little thing like that can add to one's local popularity. That must be the motive, of course,

when you come to think of it."

"But suppose now," persisted Beatrice, "that one turns up all ready to be bitten by a dog? I mean, if I were to go round to the Simpsons' dressed like a diver, on the chance, and I found a roomful of people eating muffins, and no dog at all. The situation would have to be explained



FOR VOCAL EXERCISE.

SALESMAN: This bathroom equipment has every convenience for those addicted to the morning song.

"only they've put up a trellis gate with 'Beware of the dog' on it, and that always makes me wonder."

"How do people beware of a dog?" asked Beatrice. "I've never been able to understand the exact procedure. Now, if I've got to call on some people who've a dog like that, am I supposed to turn up in greaves, with my head in a visor and bolsters tied round my person, or what?"

"I think," replied Alice, "that you're supposed to knock on the door and then run for your life."

"There might be worse methods of paying calls," observed Beatrice meditatively, "and perhaps of receiving them."

"Don't be silly," I said. "If you notice, it

away somehow. Just to remark 'I thought it looked like rain' hardly seems sufficient, and I'm sure I should never be able to think of anything else in a hurry."

"It is difficult," conceded Alice. "Yet I can't help thinking that if the Simpsons promise one a dog-bite it is in perfectly good faith. They are the backbone of the nation, people like the Simpsons; you may depend that if they say . . . "

At this moment Simpson himself entered. I beckoned him across. "One moment!" I said. "About that dog of yours. What breed is it?"

Simpson's eyebrows lifted vaguely.

"Dog?" he repeated.

"Yes, dog," I said. "A well-known domestic animal of the genus canis—as I believe the

dictionary has it. You know; a hairy thing on four legs."

"I haven't got a dog," replied Simpson.

"It was a ruse," I explained, turning to the two women. "A peculiarly low device adopted by persons who have no dog. I've heard of it before."

"Oh, I don't believe that," answered Alice.

"Not of Charlie. I feel sure that it's on order, anyway. For all we know it's at Paddington Station at this moment, gnawing through the bars of its cage like anything. Isn't it, Charlie?"

"What?" said Simpson.

"The dog," I explained. "The well-known

The Zoo authorities have recently imported a hundred tons of sea-water from the Bay of Biscay. A bad sailor who has just made the passage says you would hardly notice the difference.



AMERICA believes in having road signs with a "punch." This one comes from the States. "Steep Hill. Brake hard, or Break your Neck."



WE are reminded by a writer that Lord Balfour first introduced golf into political circles. It is too late to do anything about it now.



TABLE MANNERS.

Betty (observing pitch-fork on her first visit to a farm): Daddy, is this what the horses eat hay with?

"No," answered Simpson, shaking his head slowly. "I haven't got any dog at Paddington Station."

"Then I think you err on the side of overcaution, Simpson, if I may say so," I remarked, a trifle severely. "I can understand a man putting up a notice over his front door disclaiming all liability if the chimney falls or the geyser blows out one side of the house, and I should be the last to blame him; but to tell people to beware of a dog that doesn't even exist—let alone not getting as far as Paddington—well, it seems to me quite unnecessarily elaborate."

Simpson's eyebrows came down immediately. "Oh, that?" he answered. "If you must know, I bought the gate second-hand last week, and we're getting it repainted to-morrow."

"I see they are bringing in a Bill to prevent antiques leaving the country."

"How annoying, just as Aunt Jane was making up her mind to go abroad!"



First Boy: My father's a bigger man than yours.

SECOND BOY: Go on, mine can't reach his shoe-laces!

SYLVIA: Are you going to the fancy-dress ball?

ETHEL: No; last time I won a prize and my friends were all awfully annoyed with me.

THE SECRET DRAWER.

By Dorothea Mapleson.

They saw the old bureau in a second-hand shop, and promptly built up a romance about it, for Celia, despite shingled hair and other visible tokens of up-to-dateness, was as arrant a little sentimentalist as ever wore crinoline and chignon, and Dick was in that blissful state of newlymarriedness when a man is specially apt to play follow-his-leader. Inquiries as to price discouraged them at first, Sheraton being no cheap

may find. Love-letters or a missing will—or perhaps jewels——!"

"I'm not sure that jewels wouldn't be treasure trove and go to the Crown," remarked the cautious Dick.

"Bother the Crown! but we've got to find the hidy-hole somehow——" And after much fruitless patting and poking of the old bureau's anatomy, find it at last they did. Or rather Celia did. Suddenly from one of the many recesses a tiny flap fell down and a narrow inner drawer shot out. In it were a pile of rose-leaves,



THE OPTIMIST.

"Well-of all the astounding luck, to come bang on to a four-leaved clover!"

luxury, and a motor-bike and sidecar at the moment the goal of Dick's ambition. But the antique shop was next door to their suburban station, and they could not pass it without the spell of the bureau being daily renewed. Finally, to clinch the matter, as it were, Celia had a birthday. The bureau was bought—the motor-bike taking at the same time a leap into the dim future—and then commenced the search for the secret drawer.

"Of course there must be one," argued Celia.
"Did you ever hear of such a lovely old thing without one? And goodness knows what we

faded now to brown tinder but still faintly fragrant with the very ghost of a perfume. Under the aromatic heap lay just one letter, a square of old-fashioned paper folded in three and then once across, as if to keep its contents sacred from curious eyes. Celia stretched eager fingers, and then paused. No, it wouldn't be fair to open it without Dick. Dear Dick—he'd been so good buying the bureau—she would restrain her curiosity till he came nome. . . .

They opened the secret drawer together and Celia gently lifted out the letter from under its rose-leaves, one dried petal falling from its inmost folds. Then the same thought struck them both. Was it right to profane the secrets of a dead woman? Poor thing, she wasn't there to protest and she must have treasured that letter beyond everything to find such a hiding-place for it.

"Perhaps it was his last letter before he was killed at Waterloo," whispered Celia softly with a thought of Amelia Sedley. "I hope she won't mind just us." She spread out the crackling sheet and read aloud reverently, "'To make good Hog's Puddings. Take blood of a newly killed Hog..."

A MAN took his wife with him on a visit to Paris. As neither had been to the French capital before, they promised themselves a good time. They began by treating themselves to a good dinner.

Towards the end of the meal the man was telling his wife that her French pronunciation was all wrong, and that she shouldn't say "merci" as if it were our English word "mercy."

"Now I'll give that waiter ten francs," he told

her, "and you listen carefully."

He handed the man a ten-franc note, and the reply was, "Thanks, very much, sir."



A PROMISING SIGN.

RAGMAN: Any rags, ma'am? LADY OF THE HOUSE: No! RAGMAN (catching sight of husband through window): Any bottles?

LONDON TO-DAY.

A London man to catch a train
Boarded a 'bus, but all in vain,
Bécause it waited in a block;
With frenzied eyes upon the clock
He hailed a taxi. Sad to tell
This waited in a queue as well—
He caught his train in great elation
At last by walking to the station!

Lestie M. Oyler.



"Would you—er—advise me to—er—marry a beautiful girl or a sensible girl?"

"I'm afraid you'll never be able to marry either, old man."

"Why not?"

"Well, a beautiful girl could do better and a sensible girl would know better."

WILLIE, who was nearly five, and his mother were sitting at home one night. At the table his sister, aged seven, was doing her home-work. Suddenly mother looked up and saw Willie watching his sister.

"Well, Willie," she said, "it will not be long before you will have to go to school."

"Oh," said Willie, "it's no use sending me to school!"

"How is that?" asked his mother.

"What's the use of sending me to school?" exclaimed Willie. "I don't know anything and I can't read or write."



A MAN recently swallowed a thermometer. It is supposed that he was trying to get his temperature down.

AGAINST WAITERS WHO PUT THEIR THUMBS IN THE SOUP.

By John Leith.

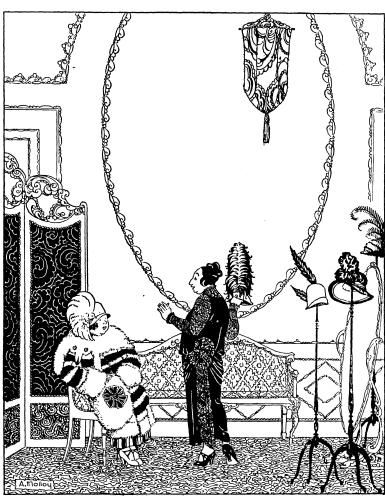
This is a writing against all waiters, everywhere, who put their thumbs, not thumb, mark you, into the soup: thumbs, plural. One thumb in is the custom of the profession, and so, sanctioned: but the man who puts two, both in, should be disqualified at once.

Not everybody knows why waiters carry a napkin loose over the arm. The popular notion is that the napkin is for use rather as a flapkin, to flap or flick crumbs away with, or to beckon customers with. This is, however, erroneous.

Ever since the day when Henry VIII, dining, curiously enough, at home, received several crumbs, a metal mustard pot, and a Gloire de Dijon rose complete in vase bang in his left or near eye, flipped straight there from the table by a more than usually undexterous servitor, this use of the napkin has been discouraged, frowned upon, prohibited, in all the best places of refection. So that to-day you may, with luck, find yourself mealing at Boppo's, or Spoilini's, or the Carlton Club, day in day out, for weeks, without once seeing a waiter flip a napkin at a tablecloth. And 'tis better so.

No, that napkin loose over the arm is to wipe the thumb on, the soupy thumb. In some restaurants, towards eventide, you can, by studying these draperies, discover whether they have been selling much soup during the day, and shape your course—courses—accordingly.

It is sometimes asked, "Why do waiters put their thumbs in soup?" The answer is various, and therefore not easily stated. Some men in the better-class feeding places, where the tips are good, say that they do it to avoid spilling: that a thumb in it seems to steady the soup, keeps it flat in the plate and prevents it from mounting the sides and slopping. As these good fellows point out, a souped thumb is more easily and cheaply un-souped than is Aubusson or other guinea-a-foot floor-covering. In a different class of the meal-mongering business, where the tips are less good, a busy waiter who induces his



A FASHION OF SPEECH.

"And is that a real osprey?"

"Oh no, madam, not at the price-it is only a sort of nom-de-plume."

customers to buy soup, can, in the course of the day, nourish himself quite sufficiently merely by licking his thumb.

Well, live and let live. And one can enter into the feelings of the owner of the carpet. Jelly, yes, if it must be: but soup is really bad for any carpet, for all carpets.

I remember once, going to West Africa, sitting under a certain steward. In many ways he was a good steward. He hadn't much hair, and what there was, was cut short. Also he was a

silent breather, and he didn't blow down your neck. At his home his five offsprings were much liked by the neighbours—all, that is, except little Emmie, and even in her case there were those who claimed that she was misjudged, or, at any rate, misunderstood.

But he was a bad man with soup. In a flat calm, as in a stiff breeze, the ship perfectly steady, or bobbing about quite lively, it was all the same. Directly he received a plate of soup at the buttery-hatch, down went both his thumbs into it. If he had a couple of plates to carry at the one trip, one in each hand, he used to give each thumb a good deep dip, then, working the plates

"Our theatres," said the American, "are much larger than yours."

"Oh, but we have some very big ones," replied the Englishman. "At Drury Lane, for instance, if a man threw an egg from the back of the stalls it would probably fall short into the orchestra."

"Indeed?" said the American. "Now if a man threw an egg from the back of the stalls in our biggest theatre, it would hatch out before it got anywhere near the orchestra."



A VISITOR at a certain fishing village asked the



QUICK WORK.

QUACK: Now, sir, you've tried a sample, won't you buy a packet of my marvellous cough cure? Rustic: Noa, thanks. It's cured me cough already.

round a little, would dip them in again, deep, in another place. I've seen his thumbs, at the end of the soup course, all red, parboiled, like crayfish.

What his motive was we never discovered. Perhaps he didn't like carrying soup. He carried none for me after the first day. The whole circumstance is very mysterious. Apart from this matter of soup, in his official duties, as in his home life, he was entirely admirable.

And what are we to do, nous autres? Well, we can eschew soup, or we can wage war on the both-thumbs-in school: at best it seems we must, if we persist in souping, accept the one-thumb-in rule. But it's all very unsatisfactory.

parson what was the principal diet of the villagers.

"Fish, mostly," said the Vicar.

"But I thought fish was a brain food, and these are the most unintelligent folk I ever saw," remarked the tourist.

"Well," replied the parson, "just think what they would be like if they didn't eat fish!"



"Why do you call this house 'Sea View' when it is in a back street?"

"Ah, my dear sir, wait till you have been on the roof!"



Are you looking old too soon?



A healthy condition of the blood is the source of all true beauty. Wincarnis refreshes your blood by stimulating the supply of red corpuscles. Wincarnis puts back the youthful colour in your face; it restores your youthful vigour.

Wincarnis owes its splendid, invigorating properties to the scientific blending of the juice of fine rich grapes with extract of beef and malt.

Make a point of giving Wincarnis a trial. Take it daily—at mid-morning—with a biscuit at tea-time—and at night.

A doctor says:—" I usually prescribe Wincarnis for my adult patients "whenever a tonic is indicated, and in most cases it has met with

"prompt success. Its constituents make it the most efficient strength"reviving agent I have met in a long course of medical practice."

(Signed) ——M.B., B.Ch.

WINCARNIS

The Wine of Life

Large Size 5/-. Medium Size 3/-. From all Wine Merchants, Licensed Grocers and Chemists. Send 4d. stamp for FREE Sample Bottle (please use 14d. stamp) to Coleman & Co. Ltd., Dept. 37, Wincarnis Works, Norwich.

BCM/ALLEN

W 3

THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

THE WARNING.

By Cynthia Cornwallis.

CYNTHIA, who was just ahead of Edward, swishing the heads off the dandelions with her light cane as she walked, suddenly turned and gazed at him beseechingly.

Her brother pulled up just in time to avoid a

collision.

"Yes?" he queried.

Cynthia merely looked appealing, and rather helpless.

"My dear girl," remonstrated Edward, "if you'll just tell me."

Cynthia shook her head; her eyes widened, and fixed him with almost painful intensity; she was apparently stricken dumb.

Edward scratched his head.

"Feeling sick?" he hazarded.

Cynthia shook her head.

"It's the sun, I expect," he said soothingly; "lie down for a bit, and you'll feel better. It's this silly craze for no hats, and very little hair."

Cynthia stamped her foot, and made an inarticulate sound indicative of impatience.

Edward shrugged his shoulders. "If you'll tell me what's wrong," he said crossly, "I'll try and help you, but really, my dear."

"Hallo!" cried Henry, coming round the corner of the path. "Seen a ghost, Cynthia?"

"Perhaps she'll condescend to tell you," grumbled Edward. "For the life of me, I can't make out what's the matter. She simply stands and stares at me with eyes like saucers."

"A witch's curse!" exclaimed Henry. "Oh, sister, don't look at me like that! Anyhow, my fingers are crossed, so I'm safe."

"Silly game, I call it," complained Edward.

"She must have swallowed something," suggested Henry in some concern; "or else bitten her tongue."

Again Cynthia stamped her foot, and shook her head; she pointed to the ground.

"Good heavens!" cried Henry; "she's

been bitten by a snake. Help her, Edward! Take her other arm, and we'll get her out of this long grass."

"Rotten path!" grumbled Edward. "Here, my dear, just hold on, and we'll get you home in a jiffy. What does one do for snakebite?"

Cynthia made a faint sound, instantly sup-

pressed, and wiped her eyes.

"She won't move!" cried Henry in exasperation. "What's to be done? Her muscles are absolutely rigid."



A GOOD IDEA.

Wife: It says in this paper that a certain cure for depression of spirits is to buy a new hat.

HUSBAND: Good! I'll buy myself one to-morrow!

Edward shook her vigorously.

"It's serious, I tell you, Cynthia," he shouted. "You must make an effort."

His sister tried to shake him off. Her face was flushed, and she seemed intensely agitated.

"She's having convulsions!" exclaimed Edward in an agony of apprehension. "Henry, you fool, why don't you do something?"

"Tell me what to do, and I'll do it," snapped

tenry.

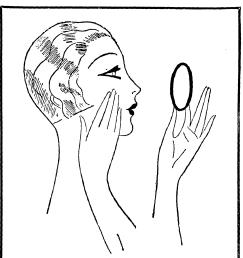
"We must carry her," decided Edward; and forthwith he and his brother lifted her, and tried to carry her up the steep grass-grown path.





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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

Cynthia struggled furiously, and wriggling free sat cross-legged on the path and wept.

"Curious," said Edward.

"Queer," agreed Henry, scratching his head. "Has she swallowed her cigarette-holder?"

"But why this stricken silence?" argued Edward.

"Wasps have been known to sting a person's tongue, I believe," said Henry. "Blue bag or cold tea is the thing, or else . . .

"Well, we haven't got either," interrupted Edward gloomily. "Where on earth is Doris. Has she got any blue stuff in her painting things—she's sketching, isn't she?"

"I'll fetch her," exclaimed Henry eagerly, and hurried away down the path.

Edward patted his sister on the shoulder. "Cheer up," he urged; "be brave, it'll be better soon."

Cynthia's shoulders heaved under his caress.

Doris came panting up the hill-side, propelled by Henry, who explained the situation as they came.

"If she had false teeth," he was saying, "I'd say she had swallowed them; but as she hasn't, she can't have. It's a fit, I suppose."

"Slap her hands!" panted Doris, "and put a cold key down her back."

"But we haven't any keys," protested Henry. "We haven't got anything, I tell you."

As he spoke Doris tripped up and fell in a heap.

"Good Heavens!" cried Edward in consternation. "Another of them! Is she having fits too?"

"Don't be an idiot!" snapped Doris, scrambling to her feet. "I tripped over Cvnthia's walking-stick; that's all."

She stooped and picked up the offending cane that lay hidden in the long

Cynthia held out her hands imploringly and

Doris gave her the stick.

"At last!" cried Cynthia in a tone of overwhelming relief, "Thank you so much for saving the situation, Doris dear."

"Do you mean to say it was all a farce?" demanded Edward indignantly, as his sister rose and brushed the bits of grass and twigs from her skirt.

"Didn't you know that it is bad luck to pick up your own stick if you drop it?" asked Cynthia in surprise.

"But why didn't you say so?" asked Henry blankly, mopping the perspiration that was

trickling down his neck.

"Oh, but you mustn't speak till someone hands it back to you," explained Cynthia earnestly. "That averts the bad luck; it's just a warning."



PUPIL: Do you notice anything good about me, Professor? INSTRUCTOR: Well, you've a useful kind of face for dodging uppercuts.

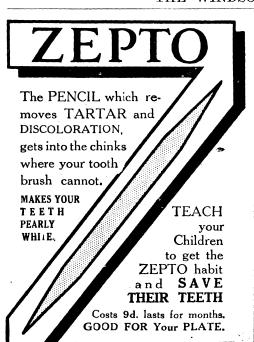
"Well, I'm-!" soliloquised Henry. "Another blinking superstition!"

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The diner was furious at the poor fare he had received.

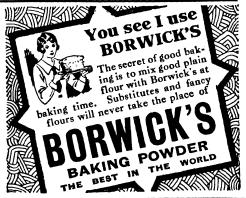
"Never," he shouted to the manager of the restaurant for whom he had sent, "never shall I tell a friend of mine to come here.

"Then, perhaps," suggested the manager, "you will be so kind as to tell your enemies."





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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

A CLERGYMAN and his wife were receiving a call from a parishioner. The clergyman's small daughter, aged eight, walked up to the visitor and, gazing intently at her, said, "Oh my! But aren't you plain!"

Her mother, of course, was horrified and sought to undo the mischief as well as she could.

"Why, Laura," she said, "what do you mean?'

Frightened, Laura stammered: "I only m-m-meant it for a joke."

Which would have been as fortunate an escape as could be hoped for, but the mother pushed disastrously onward: "Well, it would

"It's all right, then," returned Pat, as he stepped politely out of the way. "I've got orders not to let traffic through because of the rotten bridge, but seeing as it's yer honour, why, go right ahead, sorr!'

A HIGH building was being erected when a workman lost his footing and fell from the roof. In his fall he managed to grasp a telegraph wire, which still left him at a perilous height from the ground.

"Hang on for your life!" shouted his fellowworkmen, and some of them ran to procure a



A FRIENDLY TRIBUTE.

BOBBY: You would like Smithson Miror, mother. He's a very clean sort of chap—washes his neck twice a week, without being told, too!

have been a much better joke if you had said, 'How pretty you are!''



Pat had been told off to keep guard over the entrance to a road which led on to an old and unsafe bridge.

Presently a large touring car came along and Pat held up his hand.

"What's the matter?" growled the driver. At that moment Pat recognised him as the local justice of the peace.

"Oh, it's yerself, yer honour!" said Pat genially.

"Yes, it is!" was the snappy answer.

mattress on which he could drop.

He held on for a few seconds only, and then shouted: "Stand from under!" and dropped.

He was picked up senseless and taken to a hospital. On his recovery he was asked why he did not hang on longer.

"Shure," he said, "I was afraid the wire would break."



At the close of the reading lesson the teacher was questioning her class on the subject matter "What is an oyster?" she asked.

"Please, miss," replied the bright boy of the class, "it's half a fish and half a nut."



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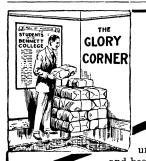
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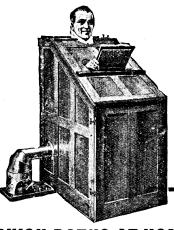
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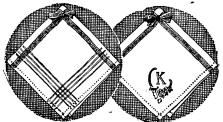
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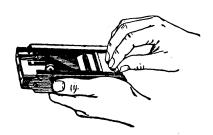
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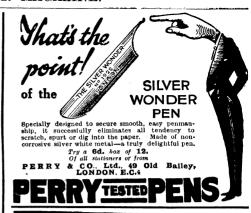
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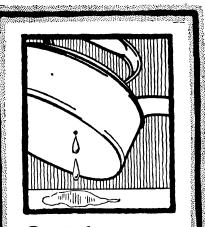
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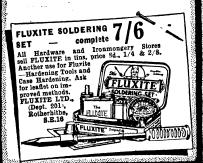
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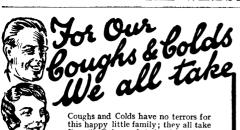
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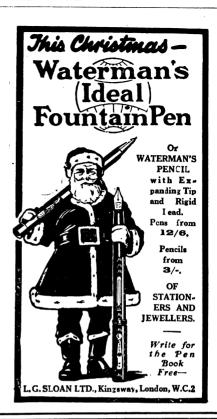
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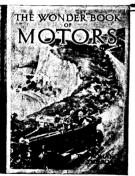
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GIVE UP ALCOHOL AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT if they want to do so. Now, since abstention from

alcohol is admitted by nearly everyone to be of benefit to health, besides being of great benefit to the pocket—and let any "moderate," drinker who doubts this keep a strict account of what he spends on alcohol during the week-we ask again, how is it that these temperate people, upon whom alcohol has so little hold, do not acquire an admitted benefit, which costs them no trouble?

And now we will answer the question. They do not do so for the reason that seven "moderate" drinkers out of ten are in reality

IMMODERATE DRINKERS.

and that, even if they wanted to give up alcohol, they could not do so UNAIDED without a very great deal of trouble, discomfort and inconvenience. Their potations may be "moderate," but they are regular; no day passes without their system becoming more and more impregnated with alcohol. They are in a worse way than the man who gets riotously drunk once a week, but who abstains during the other six days. By all means let them try to give it up; but when they have discovered for themselves what sudden abstention means, they will, if they are wise, bethink themselves of the Turvey Treatment, which is not only sure and harmless, but which obviates all feeling of collapse and depression.

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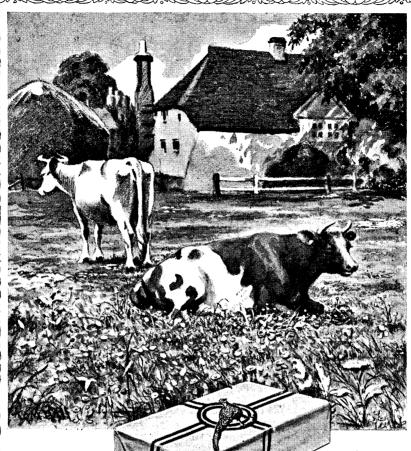
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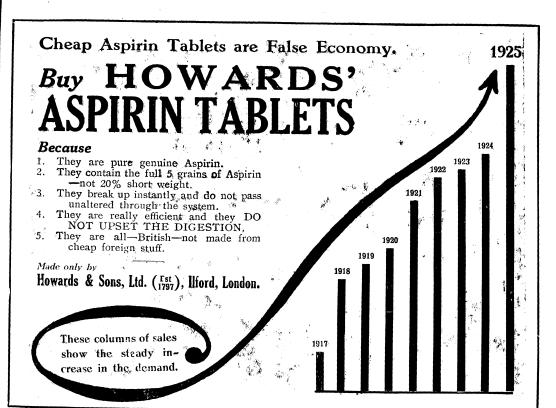
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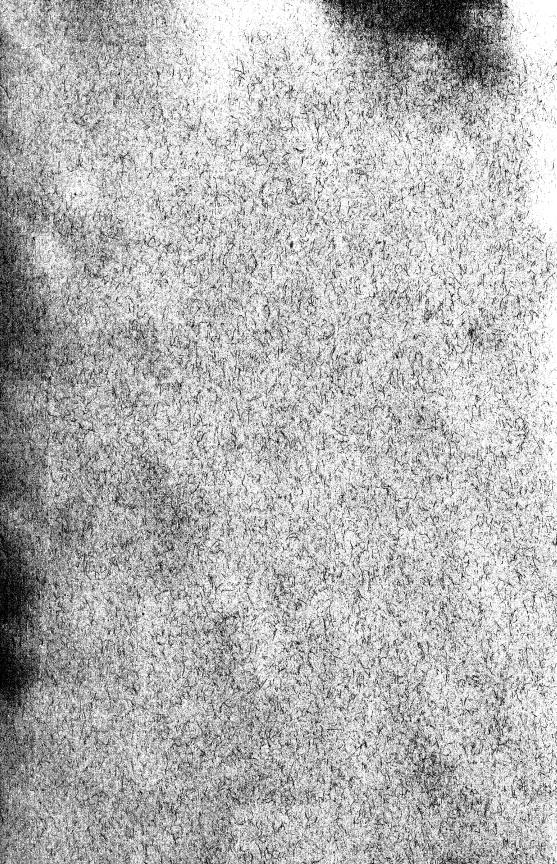
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